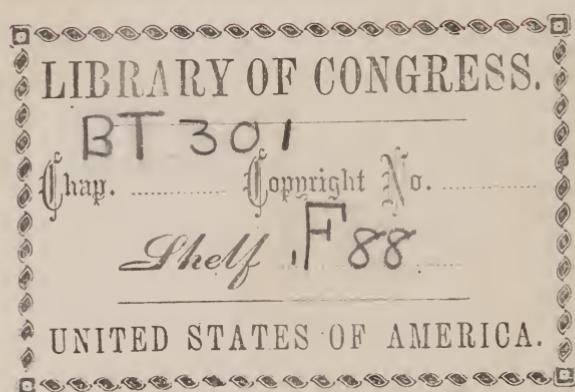
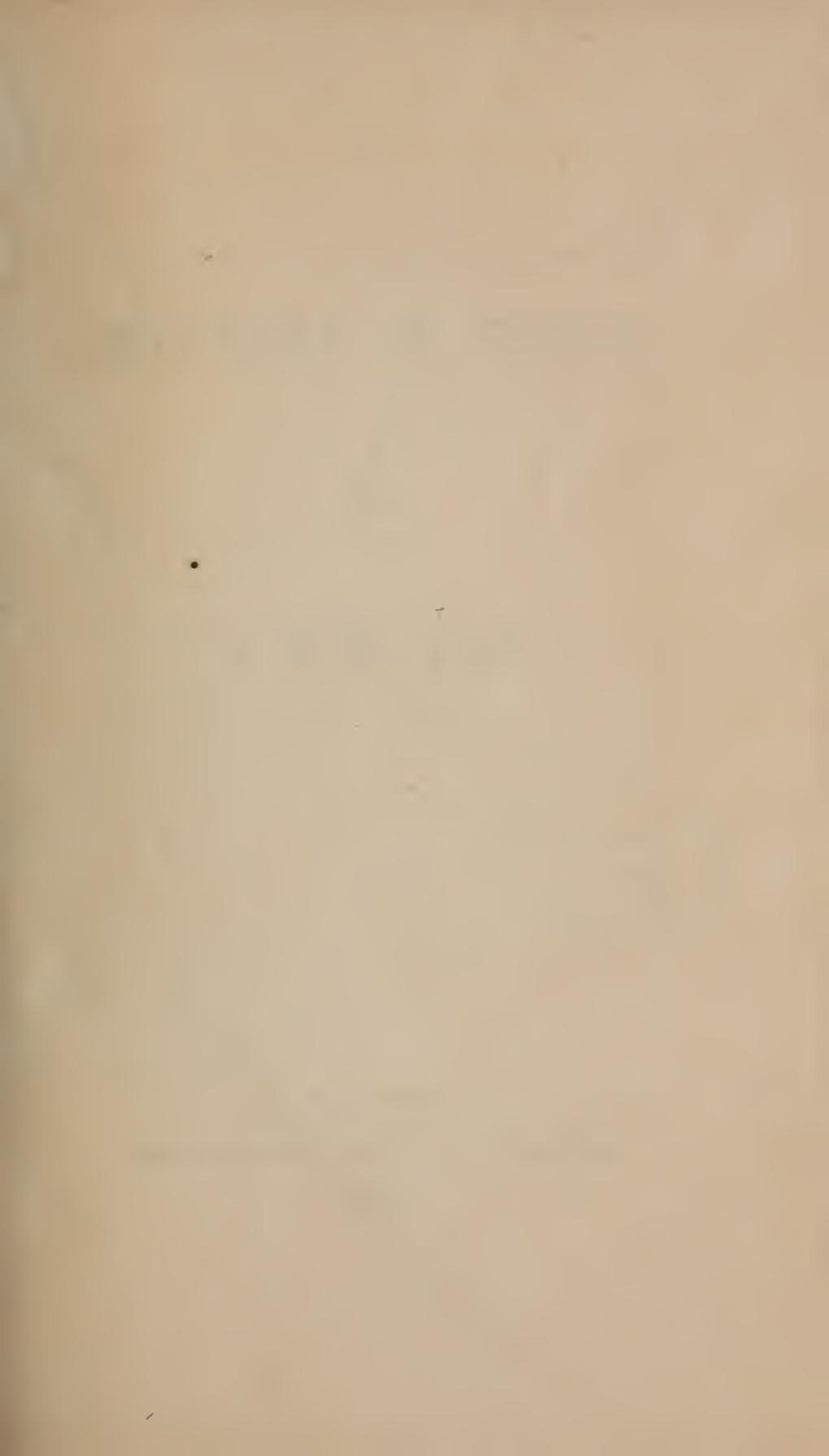




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A

HISTORY OF JESUS

BY

W. H. FURNESS
" *William Henry*



BOSTON

WM. CROSBY AND H. P. NICHOLS.

1850.

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I HAVE long had a strong desire to ascertain the simple truth concerning Jesus of Nazareth. To this end I published, some years ago, a small work, entitled, "Remarks on the Four Gospels;" which was followed, two years afterwards, by a larger volume, under the title of "Jesus and his Biographers;" a reprint of the first book, with considerable additions. Without recurring to these publications, I have written the present volume anew throughout; and in it I have attempted to tell the Story of the Life of Jesus, with as little discussion of points that may be questioned, as possible. I have had no controversial purpose. My aim has been to state many of the principal facts related of Jesus, as I apprehend them, to show the truth of the most wonderful of histories.

W. H. F.

PHILADELPHIA, MAY 1, 1850.

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HISTORY OF JESUS.

CHAPTER I.

THE JEWS — THE DESIGN OF THIS BOOK — THE BIRTH
OF JESUS — HIS MOTHER — HIS CHILDHOOD — HIS
GIFTS.

THE Hebrew race is a great race. With no civil order, no country, its remnants have been scattered now for centuries over the world, maintaining a national existence without any national institutions. What a vitality does this fact disclose! Such a tenacity of life belongs only to the mightiest element of our nature, religion.

If we had no direct knowledge of the forefathers of a people, who have so wonderfully survived changes which, in all other cases, annihilate nations, we might safely infer that their progenitors were no ordinary men. A people, whose character is so

powerfully marked, could have come from no common lineage.

But we do know something of the origin of this race. They have a great history; a history which has published itself to the world. They trace their origin and their fortunes to world-renowned patriarchs, whose forms we may descry, standing out in colossal majesty amidst the darkness of the past. They look back with unwavering faith to one illustrious leader in particular, who, thousands of years ago, when the nation was in the most abject bondage, appeared as the deliverer of his people, leading them from the land in which they groaned as slaves to a fertile country, where they grew to great power. This personage was a true king by the grace of God, qualified by nature to be the founder of an empire. Wonderful traditions exist concerning him. But his greatness lay chiefly in the simplicity and energy of his religious faith. In an age when rude images of wood and stone were everywhere regarded as sufficient symbols of the unseen objects of human worship, the founder of the Israelitish State had apprehensions of the One Invisible so pure, that he sacredly forbade his people to make any image whatever of God. Numerous laws are attributed to him; but, as a law-

giver, he is immortalized by "The Ten Commandments," enjoining those simple personal and social duties, which are also enforced by the universal sense of mankind. He was succeeded by other ruling men,—priests, kings and prophets,—an illustrious line, through whom the spirit of the national religion was transmitted.

The fortunes of this people have been various. Oftentimes they were engaged in bloody wars. Sometimes, led away by the imposing rites of other religions, they deserted their own more simple faith. Then appeared among them, like stern messengers from another world, individuals overflowing with the mighty power of ancient truth, who, in speech flaming with the grandest imagery, rebuked the sins of the people, and called them back to the One God of their fathers, who required of them, above all ceremonies, the practice of justice and humanity. These men, persecuted at first, came to be revered in the character which they claimed, as heaven-sent messengers, moved by a divine inspiration. And no one can now read the record of their words, without perceiving that they were in communication with Truth and Power. They had a vision of those eternal principles, which to discern is to see and know God, so far as God can be known to man.

Among the great men of this nation, there was one prince, who, though by no means stainless, was yet inspired with a genius so poetic and so devout, that to this hour his songs are the adopted language of devotion throughout Christendom.

It is not to my purpose to dwell at any length upon the history and character of this wonderful people. Two considerations only do I wish to premise.

In the first place, to repeat briefly what I have said above, such was the origin of this people, such have been their fortunes, and such the guides and teachers that, from time to time, appeared among them, that they stand by themselves, in respect of religion, in the history of mankind. What other nations have been in art, law, philosophy, arms, and enterprise, this people has proved in regard to religion — moulding the religious character of great nations. And the fact that now, although they have no power, no place as a nation, they are not only found everywhere, but that their sacred books are held in superstitious veneration far and wide beyond their pale, and the phraseology of their scriptures is the household speech of generations, attests the depth and might of the religious influence which has so acted upon the world.

I remark, secondly, that in connection with the intensity of their religious faith there naturally sprung up that pride which has marked the character of this people, and which no reverses have ever been able to extinguish. Not that there was a larger infusion of this quality in their nature than in that of other races; but it has sprung out of their circumstances. As no other nation has clung so devotedly to their religion, so no other nation has ever looked upon the rest of the world with so profound a contempt. Conscious of the essential greatness of their faith, they have held themselves the chosen of Heaven, and all other men as outcasts. It is important to remark, therefore, that the desperate bigotry, with which they clung to the Truth which it was given them to possess, grew to be the very strongest obstacle to the diffusion of Truth; the intrinsic force of which was restrained and fettered by the tightness with which they held to it as their private possession; and no words can well describe the tenacity with which they grasped it, especially when it was their sole distinction; and so far from having anything else, any national rank to pride themselves upon, they were objects of persecution and hatred. But as Truth is vital, and partakes essentially of the omnipotence of God, it

must needs have been that the time would come, in the course of things, when, unless Jewish pride relaxed its hold, the Truth would expand ; shivering into atoms the nation that so madly thought to keep it to itself, as an exclusive badge of honour.

The crisis came. It was inevitable in the eternal order of things. We have its history in the life of Jesus, and in the events which rapidly followed upon that life. His appearance was in conformity to unchangeable truth and nature. While in him a new development of the religious element had its origin, in him the concentrated force of Truth uprose with a victorious power, and the nation that had so long kept it to itself was ground to powder ; the mighty waters, so long pent up within those narrow Hebrew precincts, broke forth ; and although they soon lost their crystal purity by mingling with a thousand turbid streams, nevertheless, inundated a hemisphere.

I wish now so to tell the Story of the Life of Jesus, that it may be seen how it consists with itself and with all things. It has been for long ages represented as an exception, an anomaly ; and of course men know not what to make of it. It is regarded with a superstitious awe so deep as to paralyse the

common sense of those who read it. It is withdrawn from the range of human apprehension and sympathy. I wish, if I may, so to tell it that, without any distortion of its facts, it shall be restored to its rightful place *in* the order of nature; where not only its reality will become self-evident, like the sun and the earth, and whatever else there is that is, but it will be seen to be a central light, shining on all the aspects of human life, and all the topics of human thought. In attempting to fulfil this wish, I do not aim at completeness; I shall not make use of all the facts furnished by the records: not that I reject all the facts that I may omit, but because all that I desire will be done, if I shall succeed in showing that the accounts we have of Jesus contain substantially a history seen to be true, by its perfect consistency with itself and with all truth. When this is done, all historical evidence, although not without its value, ceases to be essential. The truth of the Story will be visible in the Story itself; to which such theories as that of Strauss, however difficult it may be to combat them on philosophical grounds, and however they may fit other cases, admit of no application.

At the time the Story commences, Judea was a

province of the Roman Empire ; and the hearts of the people were chafed to madness by the oppression of that hated power. Their religion had become a cumbrous form. Its temple stood a wonder to the world ; but the God of justice and love was no longer present, as of old, in the heart of the nation. The sweetness of Truth was changed into the bitterness of national pride and hate. The salt had well nigh lost its savor. In the decay of the religion of the people, the only idea which sustained the life of the nation, was a new order of things, a heavenly kingdom, which was believed to be at hand.

How such an expectation was awakened and fostered, it is easy to gather from the nature of the case. The sacred books, which the Jews so profoundly revered, bore record to the faithful providence of the God of Abraham in all the past afflictions of Israel. And the people could not suppose that they were now to be forsaken. Writhing as they were in the extremity of their humiliation under the Roman sceptre, they took heart and hope as they pondered the thrilling but indefinite language of their time-honored seers. There they found what they sought : predictions of a glory yet to be realized. They caught at every word that seemed to justify their faith and their hopes. And

thus the whole nation was gazing with earnest eyes into the near future; eager to descry the heaven-sent leader who should break their chains, and exalt them to a power wide as the world, to a glory that should cast the times of David and Solomon into the shade.

In order to see yet more clearly how this state of national feeling was generated, let it be considered that the Jewish polity was then, as we now know from history, drawing nigh to extinction. Although it ceased not without a bloody struggle, attesting its vitality to the last, yet at the period of which I speak there must have been premonitions of the crisis; the nation must have been more or less aware of its coming end; although there were but few—although, indeed, there was but one, who read the signs of the times aright. Great national changes fling their shadows before; and men of ordinary intelligence, but of no great depth of insight, have often anticipated and foretold their approach. The old French Revolution was visible to many observers before it actually broke out. Thus was it, I suppose, with the Jewish people. In their fiery impatience under a foreign yoke, they felt that things could not long continue as they were, that a change was at hand; and they fondly

trusted that the golden age, foretold, as they believed, by their prophets, was about to begin.

While the nation was in this increasing fever of expectation, there dwelt in the obscure town of Nazareth, in Galilee, a woman named Mary, married to a man by the name of Joseph, who had probably been married before, and had a number of children. Mary's first-born was named JESUS.

Of his parentage and birth we have no distinct knowledge, beyond what I have stated. Of the four different accounts of him which have come down to us, and which undesignedly show, in their whole structure, that they were derived from persons familiarly associated with him, two contain no notices whatever of his birth, and one of these purports to have been written by his most intimate friend. In the other two accounts, a few circumstances are mentioned concerning his parents and his birth, which, if not wholly fictitious, are yet of so mixed a character, that it is scarcely possible to determine the precise amount of truth which they contain. One account, Matthew's, states that Jesus was not born in the due course of nature, but was conceived by a direct act of Divine Power, before the marriage of his parents had taken place.

I reject this statement for many reasons; but mainly, because, supposing it not to be true, it is very easy to see how it originated. The story of the birth of Jesus, such as it is, is little else than an account of remarkable dreams or visions of his parents, mixed with effusions of an obviously poetical character, hymns. It is just such a story as was to be expected, when the subsequent life of Jesus is considered. His career was so extraordinary—it created so much wonder—stimulated so powerfully the sentiments of veneration and awe, and the love of the wonderful, that nothing could well be more natural, under the circumstances, than that marvellous stories should get abroad respecting his birth. These stories may have been pure fictions, generated by the love of the marvellous which the great life of Jesus did so much to inflame. Or they were exaggerations of certain simple and very natural incidents, magnified by wonder.

That the mother of Jesus was a woman of no ordinary character, the character of her son leads us confidently to infer. The mother of such a son must have been a most rare person, a woman of deep religious tenderness, filled with the best spirit of the old Hebrew faith, almost worthy of the world-wide homage which has been paid her.

Such being her character, it is not at all improbable that, being of a devout parentage, betrothed at a period when the whole nation was profoundly stirred by the hope of a heaven-sent Deliverer, sharing herself in that hope, she may have had her imagination inspired by the idea of becoming the mother of the child who should fulfil the predictions of the prophets and the fervid desire of the nation. Especially was this likely to be the case, if her intended husband was, or was only supposed to be, descended from that royal line, which, as it was believed, was to produce the prince so passionately looked for. As to be childless was considered a calamity among her people, so, on the other hand, the prospect of becoming the lawful mother of children was hailed with religious fervor, as a gracious token from Heaven. That Mary should have formed such hopes as I have mentioned, even before her marriage; that they should have so filled her imagination as to give rise to a vivid dream or vision of an angel descending from heaven and saluting her as the chosen mother of the illustrious child, is a supposition perfectly in keeping with her presumed character, and with all that we know of human nature. And so far from its breathing the slightest stain upon the virgin purity of her thoughts

that she should have such a vision, it may be regarded as a touching indication of the spotless innocence of her mind, that she should dream, and in her waking moments believe, that she was to give birth to a child upon such extraordinary and spiritual conditions, without any thought of mortal passion. In this way, we may consider the recorded vision of “the Annunciation” as a sign of that saintly chastity, which, as Milton says, is

— so dear to Heaven,
That when a soul is found sincerely so,
A thousand liveried angels lackey her ;
Driving far off each thing of sin and guilt,
And in clear dream and solemn vision,
Tell her of things that no gross ear can hear.

Deeply impressed by the dream, in confiding innocence Mary communicated it to Joseph, with the fullest expression of her own faith in it. And so it may be seen how he was at first on the point of ‘putting her away.’ But, whatever may have been his suspicions, the purity of her soul was so transparent, that he paused; and when the child was born in the due course of nature, his misgivings disappeared, and, reverencing her innocence, he believed probably that his wife had been the recipient of spiritual communications. The name

that was given to the child, *Jesus*, although not an uncommon name among the Jews, would seem, by its signification, *savior*, *benefactor*, to reveal the hopes of his parents.

Joseph also may have had dreams, according to the record. It was natural that it should be so. And it was in entire conformity with the character of the age and the people, and with human nature itself, that a peculiar importance should be attached to dreams. Visitations of this kind are yet an unfathomed mystery. At all times, even now, when we fancy we can explain everything, a vivid dream, occurring at a particular juncture, impresses the mind so powerfully, that it may readily be imagined that the dreams of Mary and Joseph would, in that age, be received as unquestionable messages from heaven.

The experiences of the parents of Jesus, in relation to his birth, were probably kept at first to themselves and their own immediate circle; and would never, perhaps, have been repeated—certainly would never have got abroad—had not the child proved remarkable. But afterwards, when as a man he became the object of all men's wonder, every circumstance relating to him grew into interest and importance. And then it was that the

visions of his parents at the time of his birth got rumored abroad; variously distorted and magnified, as is the way in such cases, as we all know.

When, years after the career of Jesus had closed, some of his friends, yielding to the demand that naturally arose for the work, set themselves to give some account of him in writing, two of the four who assumed the office of his biographers, undertaking to begin at the beginning, put on record such statements respecting his birth as were current at the time. That they took what came to hand, without examining very carefully the claims of these statements to authenticity, is evident enough from the fact already mentioned: namely, that two of the four make no mention whatever of his birth, and the accounts of the two who notice it are very brief, and are interspersed with passages of an obviously poetical character; as, for instance, the beautiful words, taken chiefly from the Psalms of David, which are put into the mouth of Mary, upon being saluted by her cousin Elizabeth as the chosen mother.

In regard to these last-named passages, we have only to consider, if the art of printing had then been known, with what a multitude of compositions, fictitious or semi-fictitious, poetry and prose, the

press would have teemed; all having the life of Jesus and its various incidents for their themes:—we have only to bring to mind this consideration, to see how it was that such notices of his birth as have come down to us had their origin. The very reality and power of his life must have generated numerous compositions of this sort, oral or written. Had there been no such fictions, it might well be doubted whether there were any facts. There was no blame and no harm in such productions. They received no additional authority at the time, from being adopted by Matthew and Luke. On the contrary, these writers adopted them, because their general reception had already invested them with a sort of authority, and because, while they accorded with Jewish opinions and modes of thought, they presented to the minds of these writers nothing directly at variance with their notions of the character and claims of Jesus.

I have thus endeavored to set forth as distinctly as possible what I regard as the most likely account of the notices which have been handed down to us of the birth of Jesus. It may be that they are founded in truth to the extent I have stated. Or

they may have even less foundation in fact. The question is really of small moment. Suffice it to say, that I see nothing in the character or contents of the records, which forbids me to believe that Jesus was the son of Joseph and Mary.

Of his childhood, saving one incident, we have no direct information. It is recorded that when he was twelve years of age he went with his parents, in celebration of one of the great national festivals, to the metropolis, Jerusalem. On that occasion, when his parents had set out, at the end of the holidays, on their way home, they missed their son. After inquiring in vain for him amongst the numerous company with which they travelled, they returned to the city, and after a while found him in the Temple, surrounded by teachers of the Law, questioning them, and being questioned in return. The incident is striking, and has often been represented on the canvass. Behold the boy, with earnest eyes and a transparent openness of expression, standing amidst a crowd of curious spectators : men venerable for their office and their age. His intelligence awakens their wonder. His earnestness touches their hearts. He has forgotten parents and home in his eager thirst for truth.

If we receive this incident as true,—and it is in such accordance with all else that we learn of him, that we have no reason to reject it,—we may gather from it that, at a very early age, his character was so far formed that his parents were not anxious to keep him always under their eye. Though they knew not where he was, they were not immediately alarmed at his non-appearance, but suffered a whole day to pass before they turned back to look for him in the city. We see also that, when a boy, he was possessed with a conviction of his relationship to the Unseen Father. When his mother, upon finding him in the Temple, mildly reproached him for the anxiety he had occasioned his father and herself, “Why did you seek me?” he replied, “did you not know that I ought to be here, where you have found me, in my Father’s house?” intimating that his parents should have looked for him nowhere else. So it appears that, as a mere child, he was deeply conscious of the obligation that bound him to a higher than his earthly parents. We are told no more of his childhood and youth than that he lived at Nazareth, where he was brought up, being subject to his parents, growing in wisdom and stature, in favor with God and man.

At what early age a sense of his great powers began to awaken in him, I cannot tell. That he was most graciously and specially endowed by nature,—a being of extraordinary completeness and elevation,—that his natural gifts were unprecedented, his whole history shows. Of all born of woman, no one has appeared like him. He represented, not a class or an age, but humanity in its highest form.

But when I speak of him thus, as one by himself, I would have it distinctly understood that I do not consider his being as a miracle in any other sense than that in which the being of every man, of everything, is a miracle. Peculiar, original as he was, his existence was strictly within the course of nature. There is nothing in nature that forbids, everything, in fact, authorizes us to look for every variety of endowment, both in kind and degree, in individuals. There is nothing in nature that renders it impossible for a human being to be born, possessed of all the gifts which Jesus possessed. I believe, therefore, that all the power which he manifested, his intuitive perception of truth, his prophetic insight, that great gift, by which, with a simple act of his will, he subdued disease, restored sight to the blind, and called the

dead out of their deep sleep, were all native to him ; that all these things came just as easily and naturally to him as the most common movements of our limbs do to us.

Let me state here in a few words, once for all, the reason why I believe this. After long and careful examination, I see in the action of the powers, which Jesus exercised, the inimitable method of nature. I see that they are real and natural in the fact that their manner of working is like that of all natural powers. There is a certain simplicity, a certain truth, not to be mistaken, which belongs only to what is natural. This characteristic is luminous in Jesus ; and nowhere more so, than in the action of those gifts which were peculiar to him. These, though new, wear the same look of truth and nature as the trees of the field and the stars of heaven. And this suffices to satisfy me that the power he is represented as exercising was not only real, but as natural to him as the commonest power we possess is to us.

To return now to the question proposed : At what period — how early — did he wake to a consciousness of himself ? No decisive answer can be given to this question. I believe that a sense of the greatness of his being and his destiny began to

break upon him very early, with the dawn of his reason ; and that in his case, as in others, the influences to which his childhood and youth were subjected, parental instruction, the gentle and earnest looks, the words and prayers of his mother, the ever-varying spectacle of life and nature, — all united to nurture in his bosom the conviction of his peculiar nearness to the Source of all Power and Good. In fine, in him the soul came to a knowledge of itself as it always comes ; only with an unequalled stillness and steadiness, revealed in the beauty and completeness of its mature growth.

Let it be considered that the nearest and most sacred relation of every human soul is that which it sustains to God. God is not only the Maker and Benefactor of every man, but He is present in every man. Conscience is God's "intimate presence in the soul." The familiar dictate of duty is the living voice of the Almighty.

The greatness of Jesus consisted specially in this, — that he saw, with full and unchanging clearness, this fact. He was conscious of the Divinity in him. His whole public life, all that he said and did, reveals his consciousness of God as the central soul of his being. He identified himself with the

Everlasting Father. He knew that he was in God, and that God was in him.

He did not come out into the world until he was about thirty years of age. Previously to that period, he lived in a retirement of which we have no direct knowledge. I have mentioned the only incident which is told of his childhood. From that incident, but chiefly from the whole tenor of his public life, I infer that the period spent at home, in comparative seclusion, was to him a time of healthy, uninterrupted, growth and culture. Day by day, in the simple occupations of a private sphere, toiling, perhaps, with his father, according to a tradition ; performing all filial offices ; communing with his kindred and associates, he was fostering into steadily-increasing strength, a sense of the Divine Presence in his soul. He learned to see all things in their direct relation to God and Truth, to penetrate appearances, to discern invisible realities, to appreciate the true life, and all the burthens and perils and destinies of man. There, in the despised town of Nazareth, amidst simple-minded people, in a lowly home, the most perfect soul that ever dwelt in the flesh was gradually growing into full beauty and strength, under the common influences of life and Providence. Possessing by nature the clearest

spiritual vision, he did not require miracles to be wrought for his instruction. He did not need supernatural communications, in the popular sense of the word supernatural, to reveal the Father to him. For the Divine Voice was heard by him in his own convictions, with a clearness, in comparison with which the voice of many thunders is but a far-off echo; and in the most familiar aspects of nature, the Divine benignity was revealed to him.

According to human apprehensions, when God designs to send forth one who shall be filled with his spirit without measure, and be the representative of his majesty and the herald of his love, he must have recourse to the most imposing methods, and work stupendous miracles, and voices must be heard by the outward ear of his chosen servant, and angels must go to and fro, visibly ascending and descending. But His ways are not as our ways. In that mean place, in an unlettered neighborhood, amidst the homeliest routine of human life, God's holy child was prepared so to speak, to live, and die, that the salvation of a world was involved in his being. To one like Jesus, even so poor a spot as Nazareth was full of the music of angel voices.

Had we any accounts of the childhood and pri-

vate life of Jesus, they would possess an inexpressible interest. But we have no such accounts, and can only feebly paint to ourselves the Divine Child. Whatever may have been his personal appearance, the fashion of his features, the color of his eyes and his hair, it is impossible that a soul like his, tender, true and fearless, a mind so full of light, should not have invested his person with a beauty which must have been felt, which no pen or pencil could portray, and of which the halo of the old painters is only a dim sign. There must have been a simple and yet more than princely dignity in his manners. How must his whole form have been irradiated by the divine flame of those emotions which glowed in his bosom! How transparent and how penetrating those beaming eyes, as they scanned earth and heaven, and penetrated the hearts of men!

At what precise period Jesus became conscious of the special power which he possessed over disease and death, and was prompted to exercise it, it is impossible to determine. It may be that he became aware of it at an early age, and that then, shrinking from publicity, he abstained from its exercise. But without being confident, I incline to believe that, although his power was born with him,

it was not until after his public and formal surrender of himself to his work at his baptism, when, as we shall see, an almost overwhelming revelation of himself broke upon him, that he became fully conscious of his extraordinary power, and was moved to use it. And that then he knew not how he wrought such wonderful effects, but only that they were wrought by the power of the All-indwelling God. As a child is moved to speak or to walk,—essentially, speech and motion are as truly miraculous as anything recorded of Jesus,—so he had a clear, involuntary consciousness of this singular power; and at first and always it flowed out naturally and spontaneously into act, without hesitancy or deliberation. It was his genius, sacred and unparalleled; and acted as all genius acts, like inspiration; which it actually is. Certain it is, that he himself thought little of it. Never once did he exercise it for the mere sake of showing it. Not even when a dense mass of men were heaving with the wonder it excited, was he moved to the slightest self-elation. It was used by him in the simple service of suffering humanity, and with no ulterior end; and therefore he might truly appeal to it, as attesting most triumphantly the divineness of his authority. Only once, and that was just before

he appeared in public, did the thought present itself to him of availing himself of the power which he was conscious of possessing, to serve his own private purpose. He repelled it as the suggestion of the Evil One. Always afterwards, he used his great gifts with the unconscious simplicity of childhood and nature. If he wondered at all, I should rather think that it was because others could not do the same things. Again and again, in terms the most explicit, he attributed the effects he produced to the state of their minds on whom those effects were wrought ; declaring that all things are possible to the believing, that if a man have faith only as a grain of mustard-seed, he would be able to do even greater things than he himself had done.

In attributing such importance to faith in those whom he healed, I do not understand him as, for one moment, disclaiming the existence of his own power ; because they could not have had confidence in him without cause. There must have been that in him, in which they could have faith ; otherwise faith would have been impossible. Had he really possessed no special power, there might have been delusion ; there could have been no faith. But in the act of exercising his power, especially upon a person whose confidence in him was full and im-

plicit, he was so entirely unconscious of any exertion ; the results produced, extraordinary as they were, followed so promptly,—they must have seemed to him, so far as he was concerned, to come of themselves,—that he was naturally more impressed with the energy of the faith which rendered these results so easy, than with his own power, which went forth from him as readily as his breath. We see here, as in all else, how far exalted he was above all self-reference. Instead of jealously appropriating to himself all possible credit, he turned the attention of the people to the point where it especially concerned them to have their attention turned, to that faith which it was for them to cherish. The faith of the suffering was only a condition of their cure ; still, it was an important condition, to which it behoved them to take good heed. We see by the light of the sun ; but in our wonder at the power of light, we must remember that, were it not for our own eyes, vision would be impossible.

CHAPTER II.

THE SELF-CONSECRATION OF JESUS — ITS REVELATIONS AND ITS TRIALS.

WHEN Jesus was about thirty years of age, the whole country was startled by the apparition, in the desert, near the river Jordan, of a man, who caught the public attention, and stirred deeply the religious sensibilities of the nation. His garb, his ascetic manner of life, and his mode of address, were all fitted to impress powerfully the Jewish imagination. Clad in a garment of coarse camel's-hair, with a girdle of leather, subsisting upon the wild produce of the desert, in him, at first sight, the venerable line of the ancient prophets seemed to be revived. And when, adopting the consecrated language of ancient prophecy, he assumed the office of the herald of the expected Prince, announcing the

approach of that personage, a note was struck to which all hearts responded. He summoned the people to prepare the way, to make a straight, smooth path for the heaven-sent king to come with his retinue, to level the mountains and raise the valleys. By this phraseology, sacred to the hearts of his countrymen, he called on all classes to reform, the high to humble themselves, the low to be exalted; and, in sign of this preparative cleansing, he required them to bathe in the waters of the Jordan; a form according with the genius and customs of the country. He became known as the Cleanser or Baptizer, and was styled John, the Baptist. He condemned, in the strongest language, the corruptions of the times, and of those who assumed the religious guidance of the nation. The vices and crimes of the powerful attracted his severe rebuke. By the austerity of his life and instructions, he made a deep impression on the popular mind, and was soon generally regarded as a true prophet.

From the scanty notices that have come to us of this singular person, we learn that he was a kinsman of Jesus. But the circumstance that reveals their mutual acquaintance and previous intimacy, is the striking manner in which John received

Jesus, when the latter came to him to be baptized. "Comest thou to me!" exclaimed the Desert Seer, who, owning no authority but God's, would be slow, we should suppose, to recognise any human superior, "I have need to be baptized of thee!" From these words, we may safely infer that John had had such knowledge of Jesus as created in his mind the deepest reverence for him. They had, I doubt not, communed much in private. They had talked together of the promised kingdom, of the corruption and blindness of the leaders of the people, of the fate which the degraded state of the nation portended, and of the sacred interests of Truth; and in this communion, the fervid soul of John had been kindled into a flame. His faith was quickened in the near approach of the great revolution. And although he afterwards said that he did not know Jesus—did not know his greatness until it broke upon him at the baptism of Jesus, still I believe that, even before he appeared in the desert, John cherished a strong hope, which needed only the impression made on him at the baptism of Jesus to become an assured faith, that his revered friend and kinsman was destined to something great, and would meet the excited expectations of the nation, proving to be the very personage whom

all men were looking for. We may thus see how Jesus exercised, in their private intercourse, on the ardent temperament of the Baptist such an inspiring influence, that the latter, without any concert or understanding with Jesus, was, in great part, prompted thereby to the course which he pursued.

With the crowds that went into the desert to see and hear John, Jesus, we may suppose, went also several times perhaps, before he offered himself for baptism. Accordingly, John, observing Jesus among his hearers, told the people that there was one standing among them so much his superior, that he himself was not worthy to perform for him the most humble office, to unfasten his sandals. He declared that the person referred to was about to winnow the nation, burning up the chaff and gathering the wheat; and that his power, compared with his own, was like wind and fire from heaven, compared with the water which he (John) used in baptism, and which was superficial in its influence; while wind and fire were subtle elements, that would penetrate and search the nation to its centre. But, however this may be, it appears that Jesus and John were intimately acquainted, and that John had conceived the greatest veneration for Jesus, and in his heart surmised that he would prove to be

the expected Deliverer of Israel. It is necessary to keep in view the reverence for Jesus which glowed in the bosom of John, in order to discern the living truth of the account which we have received of the baptism of Jesus.

When Jesus saw the whole world, as it were,—crowds came from afar,—moved by the appearance and words of John, he appears to have considered a state of things so propitious to his purpose, as a summons to begin the great work which he had so long meditated, and for which his life had been a steady and gradual preparation. But a step so momentous to himself and to others, was not to be taken without the greatest solemnity. It involved an entire change. He was to quit the security of his peaceful home, and cast himself upon the bristling passions of the ignorant and the depraved. He was to forsake shelter and friends, and expose himself to the violence of mobs, and the power of the great. Such a step was equivalent to dooming himself to constant danger and a speedy and cruel end. He did not enter upon such a course without thought and prayer. It called for all his resolution. He went to John to be baptized, to cleanse his heart, by a significant form, of all weakness and fear.

It is commonly represented that, in presenting himself to be baptized, Jesus could have been actuated by no higher motive than a desire to conform to a common and commendable custom, and to give to it, by thus conforming, the sanction of his example. But I believe that his baptism was, and that he was conscious that it was, a most momentous and trying point in his life. He did not go to be baptized merely for the sake of doing as others did, or of inducing others to do like him, but for his own sake. His whole mind and heart were concentrated in the occasion, when, with a soul melting in unutterable prayer, he surrendered himself once for all and for ever to an unstipulating obedience of that voice in his being to which he had long been listening, and in which he recognised the authority of the Eternal Father. Absorbed in this purpose of self-consecration, he entered the river whose waters could have been to him no dead symbol. Significant of the all-cleansing influence of Truth, as the stream touched his person, it gave testimony, by the sensation, to the reality of the purpose which had moved him to the act, and there must have gone a thrill through his whole being. By thus putting into execution — by thus converting into an act, his deep and long-cherished conviction,

that conviction naturally became, at that instant, new and actual. He had a new and deeper impression than ever of the reality of what he was intending to do. He had a new experience of the vitality and power and peace of a true purpose. It was not possible, in the nature of things, that he should have this experience of the truth he had been cherishing, until his purpose took life in action. Then it justified itself. He had come forth from the secluded world of common duties and mere meditation, in which he had lived; which, however earnest, was still only meditation. He had entered a new world, and taken his first step therein; and instantly, having thus put his purpose to the proof without misgiving, it stood the proof, and proved its truth, by the conscious elevation and peace which instantly filled his bosom. Had it not been true, no such elevation and peace would have flowed from it.

Such, I believe, must of necessity have been the case. It could not have been otherwise. His spiritual experience at his baptism illustrates the laws and the working of our spiritual nature. We may cherish true and great thoughts in the secrecy of our being never so long and fervently. We may have, as we think, the greatest possible faith in

them. And yet the moment we reduce them to action, which is the touchstone of their reality and power, they become new to us; so much more vital than ever before,—such a new experience of their force breaks on us, that it seems to us as if we had never known them before. They come upon us with all the force and clearness of revelations.

Thus was it, I conceive, with Jesus at his baptism. He had such a new experience. And the account of what occurred on that occasion is a representation of that experience. When, with reverence, and yet as earnestly as I am able, I endeavor to sympathise with him at that moment, and put myself in his place, I think I perceive clearly how it was that his baptism came to be described just as it is described—how it was that the heavens opened to him, and the spirit descended like a dove, and a divine voice was heard.

The states and experiences of the mind can be represented in words only by means of images taken from external and material forms and operations. They can be described in words in no other way. The inner world can be shown in language only by forms and figures of speech afforded by the outer world. Let this be duly considered. And furthermore, the deeper and the more stirring our internal

emotions, the bolder and more material will be the forms of speech in which we are necessitated to express them, if we try to express them at all. Ecstasy is represented as an exaltation to heaven. A sudden and strong impulse of mind is almost always spoken of as a voice speaking, a call. From the boldness of the forms of speech which are used, we may infer the depth of the emotion which inspires them.

Connecting these unquestionable facts with the inner experience of Jesus, when, by a most solemn act of self-consecration, he offered up his whole great being to the service of God and man, we shall perceive that such a vivid sense of Truth then flashed into his mind, that it seemed to him as if Heaven itself was unveiled. How is it possible the experience of that moment could have been expressed in any other way? The peace which then filled his bosom, and which only a sense of Truth could produce, passing all understanding, appeared to descend upon him, and rest on his heart with a dove-like gentleness. It was to him as the voice of Infinite Love calling to him, and addressing him as a beloved son.

A dove is mentioned so explicitly in all the notices of the baptism of Jesus, that it may be—

I mention it only as a supposition, I am by no means confident—that, as he came up out of the river, with his face upraised in prayer, every feature illuminated by the exaltation of his spirit, wearing an angelic expression of the peace, humility and greatness by which he was inspired, a dove, the recognised symbol of gentleness and peace, may have been hovering within the sphere of his rapt vision; in this case, it might very naturally have been regarded and represented by him as a heaven-sent sign or omen of God, of that blessed Spirit which was descending and filling his soul.

The Baptizer, with his ardent admiration of Jesus, sympathized with him, and shared in the transcendent exaltation of the moment. He was so far, at least, in sympathy with him, that he too had a vision of Heaven; he too saw the dove-like spirit in the transfigured countenance of Jesus. It is not necessary to believe, from anything stated in the records, that John heard any voice. He saw enough of Jesus then, who must have looked like one all divine, to be fully satisfied of his extraordinary character.

Let us once enter into the spiritual elevation of the occasion, and we shall perceive that the baptism of Jesus, as it is described in the records, is an

outward and sensible representation of the interior experience of Jesus and of John also. This view of the event reveals the central and spiritual facts of the case, in harmony with the laws of our spiritual nature. It gives us, instead of outward and vanishing appearances and voices, of which, when we try distinctly to apprehend them, we can form no clear conception, the soul, the life, the fact of the occasion. The more fully we appreciate the position of Jesus at the time, and estimate the greatness of the step he was taking, the entireness of his self-devotion, the more clearly we shall see how firmly this mode of understanding the record of his baptism rests upon the facts and laws of our spiritual nature. It will seem improbable and forced, only when we lose sight of the glowing heart of Jesus at that decisive moment, that era of his life.

Long and earnestly as he had revolved in his mind the divine work to which he devoted himself, it was not, as we have now seen, until he took the first step in his high career, converting his thought into act, that his conviction of the truth of his purpose became complete. Then his faith was perfected. Then it coalesced and identified itself fully

with his inmost consciousness. He could delay no longer. He could no longer remain in retirement. His great thought had become life. It was born into the sphere of action. Before, he believed; now, when he had yielded to the high impulse, he knew—knew, by “the indubitable certainty of experience” bringing light and peace, that his position was a true one, in perfect harmony with the Eternal will. Now he knew himself, by evidence furnished by his own consciousness, to be the Son and Sent of God. Before, he had aspired, he had prayed, he had believed; now, I repeat, he knew. He beheld himself with new eyes. He was the child of God, fully and irrevocably committed to the service of a child.

Filled now as never before with a sense of his destiny, he could not rest. He rushed away from the familiar places and pursuits of his former life, and buried himself for a short time in the wilderness, there to collect his thoughts, to commune with himself, to meditate on the high mission, a sense of which had just been stamped deeply and ineffaceably into his very being. After the exaltation which had testified to the sincerity and pureness of his self-renunciation, there came, by a natural reaction, a season of depression. After such a vision

of heaven as had opened upon him, the common light of day must have grown dim. When that unutterable peace, which had overflowed his heart, subsided, and that voice of God, testifying to his truth, ceased to sound, a celestial music, through his soul, there must have succeeded melancholy and unrest. "Immediately," we are told, with striking truth of expression, "the spirit driveth him into the wilderness."

Thither he went to compose himself, to gather himself up once for all for the work which was now to be his life. It was the great crisis in the history of his soul; and although he came out from it victoriously and with new power, yet it was a time of trial. Dark thoughts flitted through his mind. The self-knowledge that had opened upon him with all-sufficient clearness at his baptism, the conviction which was then made complete, that he had the Divine approbation, that his aims had the full sanction of Truth, appealed to his pride and love of power, and endangered the self-renouncing temper of his mind. "If I am the Son of God,"—this was the thought which recurred to him again and again, and brought with it the thought of using his power for questionable purposes.

He spent some forty days in the seclusion of the

desert, subsisting upon such scanty food as the place afforded; to all intents and purposes, fasting. Engrossed with his thoughts, he could have had but little inclination for food. He was in a measure insensible to his physical wants. His mind sustained him. But he could not always be sustained thus.

After a while his hunger became importunate. He craved food. And the craving intruded on his thoughts. As he strolled about in the rocky desert, absorbed in thought, but occasionally distracted by a desire for food, his eye rested on some stones, which to his imagination, affected by his physical condition, very probably bore some slight resemblance, in shape, size, or color, to loaves of bread. "If I am the Son of God," he thinks to himself, "possessed of the power of a Son of God, why may I not turn these stones into bread?" But he considered also that a man does not live merely for the sake of bread, and that his power was not given him merely to obtain food for the body. Something else is necessary besides bread. A passage of Scripture occurred to him: "Man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God." He needs for his life the consciousness of being true to the word of God written

in the heart. This thought annihilated the temptation to an unworthy use of his power.

Then, or after a greater or less interval, he was walking again in the wilderness. Lost in thought, heedless of his steps, he struck his foot against a stone and stumbled. Recovering himself from what might have been a severe fall, he recalled, according to a characteristic habit of his mind, a passage from one of the Psalms — a passage which he might well consider as especially applicable to such an accident, and as directly addressed to him, sent into the world, as he knew himself to be, on a divine errand: “He shall give his angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways, and in their hands they shall bear thee up, *lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.*” If the arms of angels were extended to uphold him, and prevent him from stumbling and falling, why might he not, he thought, go to the city, and ascend one of the pinnacles of the Temple, and leap off, and enjoy the delight and pride of being thus attended and guarded? What wonder and admiration it would awaken! But he saw and resisted the temptation to self-display. Another passage of Scripture occurred to him: “Thou shalt not try the Lord thy God.” The protection of God is not to be expected

for an act performed for a private and selfish purpose. It would be putting God to a trial, to do a thing merely to try the favor of Heaven. With this thought, again he conquered.

He wandered on; and after a while found himself on a lofty eminence, commanding so extensive a view, that the world seemed to lie at his feet. His heart dilated with the sense of greatness which the prospect created. "I may make the world my own," he thought, "if I will only fall down and worship self, and seek only my own elevation." Once more he baffled the tempter. But this was the greatest temptation. He repelled the thought with a vehemence which reveals its power: "Away! It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve."

Hunger, the weakness of the body, and vanity, the besetting sin of the world, and ambition, the infirmity of the noblest,—he resisted and vanquished them all. After these trials and victories, came the inspiring sense of triumph. In the conscious strength of his spirit, he was filled with a deep joy, which flowed into his heart as through the ministry of angels. There is no need to suppose that supernatural forms illuminated the gloom of the desert. No forms of visible brightness could

shed such a glory around as the triumphant soul of Jesus. That it was, that peopled the wilderness with ministering influences, and his own thoughts were Heaven's fairest angels.

Tried and victorious, he saw clearly now that nothing remained but to go fearlessly forth and deliver the gracious messages of Truth, come what might to himself. The sense of his great duty no longer depressed or tried him. It inspired his whole being. He left the wilderness and returned to the resorts of men, "in the power of the Spirit," full of spiritual power.

I believe in the reality of these spiritual experiences of Jesus, because they entirely accord with nature, and with his peculiar position of character. They were too remarkable, they made too deep an impression on his own mind to be kept to himself. Accordingly, as I suppose, they were related by him to one or more of his beloved and devoted friends. And the manner in which they were told is in perfect keeping with the times and the country. Bringing into view the modes of thought and speech universally current at the time, we cannot fail to see that these facts of his personal experience could have been described in no other way.

In the account of his baptism, as it stands in the records, we have a mode of description not peculiar to the age or country, but necessitated by the very nature of the case. The facts of our consciousness can be represented in words only by figures suggested by material things.

In the account of the temptation, the trying thoughts that arose are attributed to an Evil Spirit. The question of the origin of evil is a philosophical one, with which Jesus had no concern. It was not his sphere. Evil thoughts did come, and he repelled them. This was all that he designed to tell, all that it interested even him to know. As we do not yet know *how* evil comes, one philosophy will do as well as another. The fact that temptation *does* come, it chiefly concerns us to know.

As it is not easy to determine the precise duration of the subsequent career of Jesus, or to ascertain the exact order of time in which the events of his life occurred, neither is it at all necessary to the purpose of these pages. In the brief and inartificial histories of Jesus, there is a harmony infinitely more interesting and vital, and far more easily traced than the order of time—a harmony with the highest beauty, with Truth and nature.

This harmony has always been more or less dimly perceived; and the perception of it it is, which has caused the life of Jesus to be recognised as a true and heaven-sent beam from the upper glory, notwithstanding the bewildering cross-lights of a thousand conflicting theologies. I write to make this harmony, if I may, still more manifest. Once distinctly seen, it supersedes all "Evidences," commonly so called. It is only another name for the demonstration of the truth of the life of Jesus. It offers every man a firm foundation for an intelligent personal belief in the historical truth of the Story of that life. He who rests on it will regard questions of time and place as all but needless and impertinent.

CHAPTER III.

MANNER OF TEACHING — SUBJECTS OF TEACHING —
FIRST APPEARANCE IN PUBLIC — THE SENSATION
PRODUCED — CAPERNAUM — NAZARETH.

SUCH a huge and complicated structure of institutions has sprung out of the words and life of Jesus, that it is everywhere taken for granted, that it was the express end for which he labored, to build up what commonly goes by the name of Christianity, or the Church; in other words, that he had a definite plan to carry out. He is described as the Founder of Christendom. I do not question the fact, that the nations which now make their boast in his name owe much to him; that their social institutions have been so far humanized as they are, in great part through him. But I do not find that he had any precise scheme. Beyond

the great purpose of deepening and diffusing the influence of Truth, and of bringing men into a natural rather than any formal association, he had no idea, I conceive, of establishing a peculiar School or visible Church.

He came among men simply as a fellow-worker with Truth, Nature, and the Eternal Providence. The true word that he read in his heart, he spoke without favor or fear. The good which came to hand to be done, he did. He lived to be true, on all occasions, in all circumstances, to the law of his great being. This was his ruling spirit and his success. And to undertake to define the end of his existence seems to me as belittling and irreverent, as to presume to designate the final cause of the existence of the sun, or of nature itself. The genius of his life is one with the genius of nature.

He has been represented, and is now everywhere conceived of, if not as antagonist to nature, yet as distinct and apart from it. Whereas the special charm of his history lies in this: that it is the history of a human being, who came forth, and grew, and bloomed, and bore imperishable fruit on earth, making the very cross put forth boughs like a plant. He lived like a tree or a flower, and shone like the sun and the stars; and his life, exhaling its fra-

grace through the world, is refreshing, like the morning breeze or the air of mountains. He was one with God and nature, and had no purpose apart from and less than theirs. The benevolent Divinity which breathes upon us through all the beauty and goodness of things, had free course and was glorified in and through him. He prescribed no forms, founded no institutions. He committed not a word to writing. He laid down no artificial or arbitrary rules. He was informal, no system-builder. It is true, he had much to say about ‘the kingdom of Heaven;’ and, according to the popular idea, the kingdom of Heaven was a grand, heaven-constructed polity, which was then shortly to be established. But if we examine with care the representations which he made of it, and separate the ideas of it which were peculiar to him, from the popular phraseology in which he expressed himself, we may see very clearly that, by the kingdom of Heaven he understood simply the power of Truth. He lived and taught just as nature lives and teaches; except that his was an articulate voice, and his the life of a god-like human soul. He was, throughout, in closest fellowship with universal nature. He wore the dress of his country, and used its language. But beyond this we lose almost every trace

of his Jewish blood. He is a simple dweller on this earth, a child of Nature loving his mother, a Son of God, walking hand in hand with God evermore.

As every stage in the growth of a product of nature has a perfection of its own, apart from any ultimate end which it may be supposed to serve; the blossom being perfect as a blossom, and the fruit as fruit; so the separate incidents of the life of Jesus have each a completeness in itself. On this account, it is a matter of small interest what was the exact order in which the events of his history occurred. They have an essential beauty quite independent of this circumstance. And, while I observe a general order, I shall not attempt to fix the precise place of every incident that I may mention.

When he emerged from the temporary seclusion of the desert, he immediately began to teach. Let us observe him now as a teacher, and consider how he taught and what he taught.

The peculiarity of his method as a teacher consists in an entire disregard of all method. He adopted no professional dress; but appeared in the common garb of the time and the country. He

used no peculiar phraseology ; but expressed himself in the common speech of the people, which appears to have answered all his purposes. Although, for obvious reasons, he began as a teacher in the synagogues or churches, yet he was not particular as to the places in which he spoke ; but in the open air, on a mountain or at the sea-side, by a well, with only a woman for his auditor, under the roof of a tax-gatherer, or at the crowded entertainments of the opulent, at night, or at mid-day on the public road ; wherever he chanced to be, he gave utterance to his great sayings, casting them abroad with the carelessness of nature ; using no means to protect or perpetuate them. This god-like indifference to effect is well expressed in a picture, by a German artist, entitled, ‘The Tares and the Wheat,’ in which Jesus is represented as passing over the field, throwing the seed to the right hand and to the left; heedless of the birds which almost cover the ground, and of the Evil One, who, with an air of malicious triumph, is following closely behind him, scattering tares. The words of Jesus were unstudied, spontaneous. He spoke, not for effect, but from an overflowing heart. His speech gushed from him. He took no thought what he should say and teach ; it was given him at the

moment to utter, in simple, direct language, the very thought that the occasion suggested and required. His teaching was thus not only thoroughly inartificial, it was a voice—it was the voice of Nature, in full harmony with that music of hers which is audible only to the spiritual sense. To describe his teaching by any scholastic standard is out of place. It is out of the reach of all such measures, like the airy sounds of nature, the rippling of brooks, or the roar of torrents, or the songs of birds.

When we look more nearly at his manner of teaching, we find it steeped in nature. He represents the greatest truths by the simplest pictures of nature and of life. He points to natural objects, and the lilies wave in acknowledgement of the grace, and the fowls of heaven sing the care of God. The most ordinary implements in the use of man were made significant of his meaning. Bread became a symbol of himself; and by the homely process of making bread, he illustrated the working of Truth. He was throughout as a teacher in most intimate communication with all things around him. He did not stand alone and apart, a solitary voice in a wilderness, but his voice reverberated with thousandfold echoes and harmonies from all nature.

It was "made of all sweet accord." The parables which he used for the conveyance of Truth are remarkable, not merely because they were adopted to stimulate the apprehensions of the dull of understanding, but also because there is a real correspondence between the things they describe and the truths he sought to signify. Not yet, by any means, is the depth of their resemblance fathomed.

When, from his manner of teaching, we turn to the subjects of his teaching, we find the same identity with Nature. He taught as Nature teaches, and what Nature teaches; no more—I dare not say no less, for Nature is inexhaustible, and could not have been exhausted. Everything that he said was the annunciation of a fact in the eternal truth of things. He expressed no private opinions. His teachings were no inventions of his. Hence he declared that the words he spake were not his; that of himself he was nothing; that the same Power, which sent him into being, was speaking and working through him; that whosoever saw and heard him, saw and heard God. He could not, in simple truth, assert anything else. In this conviction he was above all hesitation, all fear. He spoke with a godlike self-possession. His speech was with

authority. He had that air of command which belongs only to complete conviction, and which is its own sufficient voucher; and all evidence, even of miracles, was superfluous. Whatever I am satisfied he said, I believe; because he said it, and, in saying it, spoke just as God speaks in nature.

He was the discoverer of a new world; not that world which is imagined to lie on the other side of the grave, but a world here within us, in which we are dwelling, and which dwells in us, and of which the visible world is a picture. In calling him the Discoverer of the unseen world, I do not mean that he was the first to apprehend its existence. From the beginning, all men have been more or less fully aware of their connection with invisible things; and human wisdom, in all ages of the world, has discerned the unseen realms of being, of which man is a born denizen. But Jesus was the first to enter the invisible world, and take possession of it as his habitation and homestead. He walked by its light, which for him was never clouded, and which never set; he drew from it his life, and was in harmony with its laws, uninfluenced by the artificial standards and visible distinctions of human law, custom, and opinion. He uniformly treated men not as they were estimated by their

fellow-men, but as inhabitants of a larger sphere, invested with a right in its illimitable resources, amenable to its laws, and partakers of its greatness; brothers all, bound together by ties of sympathy and love that never could be destroyed. The outward person, whether clad in the robes of rank and office, or squalid with misery, he regarded not. The inner nature had his full sympathy and reverence. He saw that men did not know themselves, to what loss they were liable, to what elevation they might rise. He saw that they did not know and love one another as they might and as they should; and his whole great soul yearned towards them with that unutterable interest which could be felt only by one who had the clearest perception of their interior being. We speak sometimes of his condescension; and, measured by ordinary standards, his condescension was great. But when we consider the way in which he uniformly saw things, everything that can be termed condescension vanishes. When the outcast approached him, bathed in penitent tears, his heart bowed before her with more than a brother's tenderness, with the fatherly love of the good God himself: "My daughter," he exclaimed, "thy sins are forgiven thee; go in peace." In little children he beheld the blest

inhabitants of a celestial sphere. It was of this spiritual world which he discerned all around and within him, and of which the visible and common world was throughout, to his illuminated vision, a remembrancer and sign, that he spake under the figure, familiar to his countrymen, of “a kingdom of heaven.” He likened its influence to a sower casting seed into the ground, to the process of vegetation, to the operation of leaven. He set forth its laws in the parable of the talents. He described its extension as invisible, and not as a matter of observation.

By employing modes of illustration, furnished by familiar objects and incidents, and which a child might understand, he virtually appealed to the native sense of Truth in the human breast; and his teachings simply unfold and repeat the dictates of reason and conscience. He declared again and again, that what he taught approved itself to the heart of every true man, of every one living in conformity to the eternal will.

I say then, in answer to the inquiry, What did he teach? he taught the relations and laws of our moral and higher nature. He taught men what they are and what they should do, what they should hope and what fear, as beings formed for spiritual

growth; and he referred them to the voice of Duty in their own bosoms, as the law of Truth and God. As spiritual beings, their life, he declared, consisted now and for ever, in loving the Right, which is the love of God, with all one's strength, and one's fellow-man as one's-self. "This do, and thou wilt live"—'live a life which is not in the body nor affected by the changes of the body; a life which thou wilt know to be imperishable, not only when thou comest to die, but immediately, in the consciousness of a power and peace such as nothing else gives or can take away.' Jesus revealed our weal or our woe, heaven and hell, here, in ourselves, in the illimitable capacity of enjoying and suffering inherent in our being. The eternal world is here with its joys and its woes; Jesus never formally asserted, he uniformly took it for granted, that man is of an immaterial, indestructible nature. He read man's immortality in man.

And over this unseen sphere, in which man and all things are contained, Infinite Goodness presides, according to Jesus. The all-governing Power was signified to him most clearly through the tenderest of human relations, the parental relation. Not that he was the first to call God, Father. The word had come from myriads of lips in all parts of

the earth, before he uttered it. But I think he had a quite new, original sense of the Divine Love. There is nothing in him, in my view, more striking, nothing that more emphatically attests his abundant inspiration, than his commanding conviction of the love of the Invisible. Let any one, to the best of his endeavor, put himself in the place of Jesus, and he may see the truth of what I say.

Here was a young man, born in obscurity, brought up in the humblest circumstances, cherishing thoughts in which no one shared, and prompted to a course of life, which, however it attracted public attention, stirred up the strongest opposition. All that the world accounted wise and honorable and great, frowned upon him. His own family were alarmed, and suspected that he was insane; and he was told again and again that an evil spirit had got possession of him. In this situation, with the world rising against him, and pointing to the horrid Cross as his merited doom, must not his outlook have been dark indeed? The mighty contradiction,—why did it not overwhelm him utterly? What kept his mind sane, and his heart from being broken? How clear and penetrating must have been the insight that enabled him to descry, through the thick darkness of his position, the

Sovereign Good that was at work in and through all! He beheld no all-devouring Fate, no unconscious Necessity, but a Love which wore the aspect of a parental tenderness. Unbewildered by what would otherwise have been the crushing mystery of existence, in filial confidence, he called the Unseen, Father. Solitary as was his lot, he leaned with the trust of a child on the bosom of Infinite Goodness. Thousands of men, whose condition contained no such contradictions as his, have been so overpowered by the mystery of Life and Suffering, that they have been driven to the desperation of utter denial. But to him the Love of the Invisible was as manifest and as near as if he had been in heaven, and all the sorrows and distractions of life had sunk down into an unfathomable abyss beneath him. The name of Father, in application to God, coming from the lips of Jesus, is not the mere echo of a word caught from others. It is an original testimony to the Parental Spirit which gathers the Universe under its wings. It is the voice, not to be mistaken, of a Son pronouncing the name of Father, modulated by that filial faith which only a clear vision of the Father could create. And thus he taught, with an original authority, that man is here, not as an accident, not as the growth of a

blind Necessity, but as a child dwelling forever under the paternal roof.

We have no particular account of the circumstances which first drew public attention to Jesus. We merely learn that, when he reappeared from the desert, where he had been for a while secluded, he began to teach in the synagogues or churches of the land, calling upon the people to reform, for that the kingdom of Heaven was at hand. By which I understand both him and John to have meant simply what has proved to be an historical fact. A great crisis was approaching, the signs of which were as legible to Jesus as the indications of the changing weather, (so we may gather from what he said once to certain of the sect of the Pharisees,) and which would demonstrate the Providence of Heaven, and tend, by the overthrow of the Jewish State, and by sweeping away the desperate bigotry of that people, which was the great immediate obstacle to the power of Truth, to establish that power. Upon making this annunciation, Jesus was instantly surrounded by immense multitudes, and the greatest sensation was produced. People came from all parts of the country to see and hear him. Crowds were collected around the doors of the houses which

he was seen to enter. Such numbers were constantly coming and going, that he and his friends had no time for their meals. For some time, at first, he kept for the most part on the borders of the Sea of Galilee, evidently because opportunity was thus afforded him, by crossing the lake, to withdraw from public notice, and from the excitement caused by his presence, when it became too great. Occasionally, he retired from the public eye altogether, to allow the excitement to subside, and to avoid any outbreak of popular feeling, which looked for a political reformer and military leader. His mother and kindred were alarmed on his account, and feared that he was beside himself, and went in search of him.

From the desert, as we are told, he went into Galilee, to Capernaum, situated on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee; thus avoiding the jurisdiction of the prince by whom he had heard that John had been seized and thrown into prison. I gather from the records, that he made his first appearance as a teacher in the synagogues, the Jewish places of worship, and on the Sabbaths, the consecrated days of religious service. Upon visiting the synagogue at Capernaum, he was preceded by the rumor of his wondrous gifts. He had previously

given, I suppose, such evidence of his extraordinary power, that expectation was greatly excited; and although no public expression was given to it, yet the idea that here was the promised Deliverer, was springing up in many minds, and whispered from one to another. He spoke in the synagogue, as the custom of the place permitted. His hearers were deeply impressed with the air of authority with which he spoke, so different from the formal manner of their established teachers, who lacked that commanding strength of conviction, that sense of reality, which inspired him. It can readily be imagined that the difference must have been very striking. The people had heard nothing like it before. Into the congregation there had wandered with the crowd, a man who was insane, and who, of course, according to the universal idea of the time, was considered, and considered himself, under the power of an evil spirit. Excited by the words and the commanding bearing of Jesus, and by the excited looks of all around him, this individual lost what little self-possession he had retained, and unable to restrain himself, cried out from the midst of the assembly, and speaking in the character of the spirit, by which he might well suppose himself prompted, since he could not command himself, he

exclaimed, "Ah! why do you trouble us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know you, who you are, the consecrated one of God!" The man spoke right out what many were probably thinking in their hearts, but did not venture to say. Into what a commotion must the assembly, already greatly excited, have been thrown by this startling outcry! Jesus alone, undisturbed and self-possessed, turned directly, and commanded the evil spirit to be silent and quit the man; who thus personally addressed and with an air of unearthly authority, fell into convulsions, uttering an agonizing cry, and then became perfectly subdued and calm. No doubt, from that moment he regained his self-possession completely, and the idea that a malignant spirit was in him was expelled from his mind for ever. All present were overwhelmed with amazement at this manifestation of power. They knew not what to make of it.

Jesus quitted the synagogue and went to the house of a friend, whose mother-in-law was lying ill of a fever; which, when he learned, he went to her and took her by the hand, and immediately she became so much better, that she left her bed, and set about discharging the offices of hospitality. The rumor of this case, following upon what had

occurred in the synagogue, created the greatest stir; and at sunset, when the Sabbath was at an end, the whole city seemed collected round the door of the house where Jesus was. The sick and the insane were brought to be healed, and many were healed. There was little sleep, I imagine, in Capernaum that night. Early the next morning, before the break of day, Jesus left the place, seeking the solitude of the country. Certain friends of his, (whom he had previously induced to leave their usual pursuits and accompany him on his excursions over the country,) went in search of him. When they found him, they told him that every body was inquiring for him. He did not then return, however, to Capernaum, but proceeded to visit other places, teaching in the synagogues.

Travelling through the country, he visited Nazareth, the town where he had been brought up. He was coolly received. The people had known him and his family from his infancy, and could not think of the carpenter Joseph's son as anything remarkable. As reports were brought to Nazareth of his wonderful works and sayings, the people of that place sneered, I suppose, at the credulity of the world. Consequently, when he appeared in the town, "he could do no mighty work there, save that

he laid his hands upon a few sick persons and healed them." Unquestionable as was his power, it was nevertheless, as we see, conditional ; it appears to have depended, in some degree, upon the sympathy, created by confidence in him, between him and the subjects of his power.

On the Sabbath, he went into the synagogue, and as he was wont, he stood up. By this act, according to the order of the service, he was understood to offer to read ; and there was handed to him the volume of the prophet Isaiah. He turned to that beautiful passage : "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor ; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to proclaim deliverance to the captives, and the recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." Having read these words, in which the ancient prophet, under an allusion to the year of jubilee prescribed by the Jewish Law, when slaves were set free, and debts remitted, and property restored, described the blessings of the Truth which he himself taught, Jesus gave the volume back to the attendant, and sate down ; intimating, by thus taking his seat, (Jewish teachers taught seated,) that he was about to speak. All

eyes were fastened on him, as he proceeded to declare that the words he had just read were being fulfilled at that moment. His hearers were struck with the power with which he spoke, especially when they reverted to his humble connections. He told them they were ready, of course, to sneer at him, and say, "Physician, heal thyself. You have healed others elsewhere,—at Capernaum,—come, let us see you do some act of healing here, in your own town." But he did not expect that his own townsmen would give him any credit. He knew, he said, that no prophet was honored among his own people. They might flatter themselves they had a special claim upon him. But he reminded them of certain facts in the Scriptures which they venerated so profoundly; how, for instance, there were many widows in Israel in the time of one of the old prophets, when a great famine raged, and yet the prophet relieved none of them, but was sent to a widow who was a Gentile; and again, although there were many in Israel afflicted with leprosy, in the time of another prophet, yet these were left to suffer, while a Syrian was healed. This language instantly stirred up a storm of wrath, and the synagogue was in an uproar. The Scriptures,—what a profanation was it to quote them thus, to prove

that dogs of Gentiles, whom the Jews despised as we despise Africans, had been preferred before the children of Abraham! The idea was not to be tolerated. The meeting was broken up in disorder, and Jesus compelled to quit the spot. The mob grew bloodthirsty; and had he not slipped silently away, they would have laid violent hands on him. There was a talk of throwing him off headlong from the brow of the hill on which the city stood; but he left the place without receiving any injury.

Wherever he made his appearance, a crowd instantly gathered around him, and the excitement grew so, that he had to keep as much as possible secluded. Once, as he was travelling with only a few friends, at a distance, as I suppose, from any city,—as persons suffering with leprosy were compelled to keep apart from human habitations on account of the contagious nature of that dire disease,—an individual suffering that terrible affliction recognized him, and came and knelt before him, declaring that if he only would, he could cleanse him of the leprosy. With a brief and simple expression of his good-will, uttered in a tone of regal authority, he laid his hand upon the leper; and instantly, at that electric touch, the disease vanished! Popular feeling, however, was so high, that

Jesus charged the man not to tell how he had been cured, but to go and have his cure certified in due form by the priest. But the man could not keep it secret. It got abroad, and the whole country was in a flame of wonder and expectation ; "insomuch that," as one of the records states, "Jesus could no more enter any city, but was without, in desert places, and they flocked to him from all quarters."

CHAPTER IV.

SERMON ON THE MOUNT — PARABLES — PROPHETIC
POWER — INCIDENTS — SCRIBES AND PHARISEES.

I LEARN, as I have already said, from the records, that when Jesus first appeared in public, he taught almost exclusively in the synagogues. It was natural that he should go where the people were already collected, when he wished to address them. But very soon the attention of the public was attracted to him so powerfully, that a crowd gathered around him wherever and whenever he made his appearance. He did not then wait for the Sabbath and the synagogue ; but, seeing the multitudes, he led them to a mountain, or to the shores of the lake, where the locality was convenient for speaking and hearing. It was on an occasion of this sort that he delivered the Sermon on the

Mount; a discourse which, I think it probable, was not all given at once. It may be that, as we have it, it is in great part a compilation of his precepts, uttered and repeated on various occasions and in different places.

I shall not attempt to comment on it with any particularity. It has written itself on the hearts of men. Wise and simple may find in it an exposition of the whole duty of man, given with the authority of a voice out of heaven. To the truth and thoroughness of its precepts, the universal conscience of mankind will for ever bear witness. Let every man ponder it for himself. It is intelligible to the humblest mind. It cannot be exhausted by the highest. It illuminates every sphere of human life, announcing the laws of personal and social well-being.

How true and original is its beginning, an answer to one of the great questions which the wisest of the race had been endeavoring to solve, and of which philosophy had given such various solutions: What is happiness? an answer, given in the form of benedictions, flowing from the heart of the speaker,—benedictions upon the lowly-minded, the sorrowing, the pure-hearted, the lovers of peace, the brave sufferers for Right. In these immortal

beatitudes, I hear Jesus exulting in the vision of the beneficent laws of our inner nature. These brief utterances—how widely do they differ from the ordinary apprehensions of mankind, who, in all ages, to this day, search for happiness without, and pray for it to come from abroad. Jesus points with the authority of Truth, into the pure, humble and breaking heart, and discloses the perennial fountains there.

But it is in contrast with the flaming passions of his immediate hearers, that the first words of the Sermon on the Mount are most striking. Employing the most familiar language, and thus taking it for granted that the people around him, coarse-minded as they were, understood what he said, he told them that they only were happy who were cherishing affections directly the opposite of those which his auditors were then indulging. They were ready to rush to arms, to shed blood, to gratify sensual passions, to persecute the lovers of righteousness. Jesus assured them that not by such means, but directly the reverse, would they be blest.

In another part of this great Sermon,—great in itself, and great as coming from the lips of a young Jewish peasant,—resort to violence, even in the

case of gross personal injury, is forbidden in direct and unqualified terms; and by the example of Him who causes the sun to rise and the rain to fall on the just and on the unjust, men are commanded to do good to those who do evil to them. Never before was such a precept urged with such emphasis. It distinguishes the morality of Jesus. But notwithstanding the authority which has been accorded to him for centuries by great nations, the obligation of this law of his has been almost everywhere repudiated as impracticable, and the precept itself accounted an exaggeration. Yet the early history of the only religious denomination — the followers of George Fox — who have accepted this law in its completeness, justifies the power and soundness of the principle.

Without pausing to dwell on the moral truth of the Sermon on the Mount, I remark that it is not more striking in itself than as it illustrates the being of Jesus, and is illustrated by it. What we have here in words existed in him as life. The qualities which he pronounces happy are far more vividly expressed in his character. No language, though it fell from an angel's lips, could show us the truth of returning good for evil as it is shown in his life, and in his death, as the crown and seal of his life.

Upon another occasion, when the people crowded around him, he entered a fishing vessel belonging to a friend, and directing it to be cast off a short distance from the shore, which was crowded with people, he began to teach, relating various parables or allegories, the aim of which was to direct attention to the moral features of that revolution which was expected, and which to the discerning spirit was already begun.

In the parable of the Sower casting seed into the ground, some of which falls among rocks, some into a thin soil, while some the birds consume, and some again is received into good ground, and springs up, and yields abundantly, Jesus intimates that the power of Truth is dependent on the state of mind with which it is received. Here was a consideration which it was of the first importance should be impressed on his countrymen. It became them to look well to themselves, or they would miss the good they were so fondly anticipating. Accordingly, Jesus concluded the parable with a warning to his hearers to use their ears.

Then he told another story, pregnant with meaning, of a man who sowed good seed in his field, but at night his enemy came and scattered the seeds of weeds among the wheat, which came up with the

wheat, and which when the servants saw, they were for pulling them up. But their master forbade the field to be touched until the harvest. Then the weeds were separated from the wheat and burned, and the good grain was gathered into the garner. In the small circle of his chosen friends, Jesus afterwards interpreted this as well as the former allegory; and, according to his interpretation, it is a description of the moral government of the world, and a prediction of the coming order of things, when good would be separated from evil. This, he taught in this parable, was to be one of the prominent characteristics of the expected kingdom; one of the chief things which He, whom the nation was waiting for, would accomplish: the distinguishing of the true from the false, the separation of good from evil.

This parable, as a prophecy, suggests certain interesting considerations in regard to the prophetic insight of Jesus.

To the seeing eye, both the past and the future are visible in the present. In what is, as physical science testifies, may be discerned what has been thousands of years ago, and what is to be thousands of years to come. At the period at which Jesus

appeared, the whole Jewish nation was prophetic. It had faith in the great change that was at hand. It is true, this belief rested mainly on the supposed authority of ancient Prophecy. But, as I have already remarked, since, as we now know from history, the entire overthrow of the Jewish State was at hand, so important an event must, from the nature of the case, have been preceded by symptoms, ‘signs of the times,’ more or less striking; which many must have felt, even though they were unable to define them. John the Baptist, with his fervid sense of the corruption and decay of Religion, had, I suppose, a fore-feeling of the approaching change, of ‘the coming wrath;’ and this was one of the things which prompted him to utter his cry of warning. To John, the appearance also of such a person as Jesus, armed with the might of Truth, must have been another stirring sign. In the people, he saw the seeds of decay germinating; in Jesus he beheld the power of the Truth which was to renovate and restore. But to Jesus himself, with his clear, spiritual vision, how much must have been visible which was visible to no one else! He foresaw not only the coming ruin of the nation, but also the grand opportunity which would then be given, by the breaking in pieces of Jewish pride,

for the diffusion of Truth. Standing where he stood, he could not but regard the bigotry of his countrymen, which excommunicated all other nations, and which was the immediate and most powerful obstacle to his own purpose, as the one great obstruction to the establishment of the empire of Truth and Righteousness, the coming of the divine kingdom, the reign of God, which the Jews expected in the form of a magnificent dominion, with a heaven-anointed prince at its head.

Filled with wonder at the overflowing measure of Truth which he possessed, and at the far-reaching vision with which he saw into futurity, I certainly have no disposition to limit the range of his prophetic power. But since he himself is recorded to have declared that his knowledge was limited, that he knew not — that God alone knew, the exact time when the nation would be overthrown, I think there is reason to suppose that he expected that the downfall of Jerusalem would be followed by a more speedy and complete establishment of the dominion of Truth, than has been witnessed. His idea, I believe, of "the coming of the Son of man," was purely spiritual, not personal, but the living force of Truth, entering with new energy into the world. He saw that it was impeded; it could not come, so

long as the Jewish order of things remained standing. That once swept away, then Righteousness would triumph and prevail without obstruction. Beyond that, the vision faded away into indistinctness, as it must have done to all but the Infinite Eye. He did not see—it was needless that he should—how, when Jewish opposition would have been broken down, the Truth which went forth from him would have yet other obstructions to overcome, and would be checked and crippled by Paganism and false philosophy, and the interests and cunning passions of men. But I wonder, not that he did not see these things, which were then hidden in a remote futurity, but that he saw so far as he did, and foretold what the world has since witnessed, and is even now witnessing: the influence of those principles, which came into the world with a new force in him, and, going forth from him, survived the ruin of his country, and went abroad over the earth; tending mightily, according to the prediction of the parable, to separate the true from the false, the good from the bad. Yes, the Truth, made vital by him, has come, and is winnowing the world, separating the chaff from the wheat. Mighty angels are abroad in all those agencies which the progress of things has brought into operation;

separating the tares from the wheat, burning up the tares and gathering in the wheat. Still, I do not suppose that Jesus foresaw — the prospect was too far distant for any but the All-seeing — how mournfully Truth would be neutralized and perverted for ages after the destruction of the Jewish nation had seemed to make a smooth way for its coming in power and great glory. Surely it would have fallen with a breaking weight, even on his heart, mighty in faith, had he foreseen that, centuries after him, the record of his own words would be appealed to for permission to wage inhuman war, and to treat man as a thing to be bought and sold like a beast of burthen. Penetrating as was his spiritual sight, he yet knew not, as he himself said, *when* his predictions would be fulfilled, save that it would be in that generation ; neither, as I conceive, did he know *how long* the harvest would be in gathering. That was known only to Him, before whom a thousand years are but as one day. With this understanding of the prophetic power of Jesus, I resume the Story.

He related many other parables to the people, the aim of which was to call attention to the invisible, moral features of the new order of things, the

next ‘age.’ Afterwards, when he was alone with his chosen friends, they asked him why he spoke in parables. ‘You are able,’ he told them in reply, ‘to understand the hidden truths concerning the expected kingdom, but the people at large are unable. Their modes of thinking are so gross, so depraved by pictures of an external greatness and splendor, that they would not apprehend my meaning, were I to speak more plainly. I employ parables to stimulate their curiosity, and set them thinking out the Truth for themselves.’

We shall have no adequate idea of those startling and instantaneous cures wrought by Jesus, unless we keep fully in view the tremendous excitement by which the whole country, far and near, was stirred. The crowd at times was so great, that people were in danger of being crushed to death or trampled under foot. The land was electrified. Faith and hope and wonder, to which his words and acts, and looks even, as I cannot but believe, appealed with a mighty power, ran like wildfire through the country,—raged like an epidemic. The strongest emotions of our nature flamed forth as at the visible presence of a god. Persons suffering from any physical infirmity were of course

particularly sensitive — liable to be greatly affected by sympathy with the popular feeling which surged around them, fusing all hearts. Every man knows how powerfully mental excitement acts upon the body.

On one occasion there came persons to Jesus, requesting his help in behalf of a youth belonging to the family of a Roman officer, whose liberality and respect for their religion had won the regard of the people among whom he was stationed. The circumstances of the case justify us in supposing that he was a man who had been particularly impressed with the excellence of the religion of this conquered people. Certain it is, that he had seen and heard enough of the wonderful man who engrossed public attention, to have conceived entire confidence in him. With the request thus preferred, Jesus signified his readiness to comply, and turned to go to the centurion's house. On the way, the centurion himself, who, perhaps, in his humility, had not dreamed of being so honored, met him and said to him : ‘Sir, I am not worthy that you should visit my house, neither is it necessary. Just speak the word, and the boy will be well. Even I, who am at the beck and bidding of others in higher

authority than I, even I can command those who are under me, and I am obeyed. Do you then order it to be so, and the child is well.' Such an address, such confidence expressed in him by a Gentile, struck Jesus with astonishment, and he turned to those who were with him, and declared with emphasis, that he had met with no faith like this among his own countrymen ; that people would come from the remotest quarters — from the East and the West, and the North and the South, and enter into communion with the saints and patriarchs, while those who accounted themselves the exclusive heirs of the coming kingdom would be thrust out into darkness. Turning then to the centurion, he said, 'As you have believed, so be it.' The centurion, who had shortly before left the sick lad, from the impulse of a faith which we may readily imagine the boy to have caught from him, returned home, and that very hour the boy was restored. His disease was a nervous one, palsy ; and we readily see how the expectation of seeing or hearing the wonder-worker must have acted on the susceptible mind of the youth. He must needs have got well.

In this incident we have an illustration of the prophetic insight of Jesus. He saw in the case of

this Roman a token and pledge of the force of the Truth, which, when Israel should be cast out and cast down, would touch human hearts all over the earth, and bring them into full fellowship with the great and good of past times.

On another occasion, there was a woman in the crowd following Jesus, who had been a sufferer for years, trying all sorts of remedies in vain. She had heard of the wondrous cures he had wrought; and her own suffering condition would naturally and strongly incline her to believe in his power. Perhaps she had herself witnessed the effect of the extraordinary gift with which he was endowed. But, with a natural timidity, she shrunk from soliciting his aid; or, in her humble opinion of herself, she perhaps did not dare to hope that, amidst so many people, and with his attention so occupied, he would pay any regard to her. And yet her faith in him was undoubting. She thought,—so profound was the reverence he had awakened in her,—that, if she could only get behind him, and touch only so much as the hem of his garment, she would at once be healed. Accordingly, she pressed through the crowd, and, watching her opportunity, clutched at his clothes with that convulsive motion

which her throbbing heart, all in a tremble of emotion, must have prompted. It was her last hope of cure. The touch must have been to her like an electric stroke—not merely affecting her nerves, but penetrating like lightning to the inmost springs of her life—and instantly she felt that she was healed! Jesus perceived something significant in the manner in which his clothes had been grasped; and, surmising the real state of the case, turned round, and asked who it was. The persons about him were surprised that, in such a crowd pressing upon him, he should ask such a question. He persisted; there was, he was persuaded, a particular meaning and purpose in the act. Upon this, the woman, naturally ingenuous, or, perhaps, after such an experience of his power, thinking it fruitless to attempt to conceal herself, came forward and confessed the whole truth. She must have felt as if she had committed a fraud, in having stolen from him her cure; for she had imagined that there was a mysterious healing power in his very clothes. Jesus assured her that she had no reason to be afraid, bade her be of good cheer, and told her that faith had cured her. We thus see why it was that he insisted upon knowing who it was that had caught at his garments. He divined what the mat-

ter was; and, whoever it was that had done the thing, he wished to assure the person of his goodwill, and inform him or her that it was not any medical efficacy in his clothes, but the person's own faith, which wrought the cure. He wished especially to commend that.

This incident occurred when Jesus was on his way to the house of a man of some note, one of the presiding officers of the synagogue, who had solicited a visit from him on account of his daughter, a child of twelve years of age, who was lying at the point of death. Before he reached the place, intelligence came that the little girl had breathed her last. Jesus, bidding those who were with him to fear nothing, but only to have confidence in him, continued on his way. When he reached the house, he found many people there, and the mourning women whom it was the custom to employ on occasions of death, and who, with cunning power, so counterfeited the expressions of grief, as to move all beholders to tears. He instantly caused the people to leave the house; declaring that the child was not dead, but only asleep. The declaration was received with incredulity and derision. Nevertheless, all were dismissed but the parents of the child and two or three of his friends.

He then took the little girl by the hand, and with a tone of authority bade her rise. And she rose immediately, and stood on her feet and walked, and he directed that something should be given her to eat. All these wonderful effects which he wrought are marked by a striking directness and simplicity in his mode of proceeding. There was no imposing work of preparation, no parade. But all that was done was done naturally, without noise or show. In this last instance, so far from making any account of his power, he tried to conceal it. He said that the child was not dead, but only asleep; which he could safely say in the confidence of that power by which he was about to recall her to life. He permitted only two or three persons to be present, and these he charged not to tell what had taken place; for the sensation these wonderful things produced was so great, that he had to retire before it, lest the people should insist upon his placing himself at their head, as their leader and king.

It lay in the nature of the case, that Jesus could not long continue saying and doing these things, without coming in collision with that powerful class and their adherents, who arrogated to themselves all authority and influence in matters of religion.

In their hands, religion was made a mere string of outside, ritual observances, dead husks, on which they pretended to feed the people, but which could meet the wants, interest the affections, of no living soul. It had no sincerity, but was dry and dead, with not a drop of life in it. It thrust away into the background, amongst unregarded things, the eternal laws of Justice and Humanity, and put forward in their place the most trivial ceremonies. The established teachers of the religion of the day were those classes, designated in the records as Scribes, lawyers or teachers of the Law, of the sect of the Pharisees. All the literary men of the country were entitled Scribes, or teachers of the Law, because the Scriptures, the sole literature of the nation, constituted their chief study.

Besides the written Law, contained in the Old Testament, the Jews recognized an oral law, ‘the traditions of the elders;’ a multitude of rules and precepts, chiefly ceremonial, which had been handed down from age to age, and to which every age made additions, until it became necessary, if they were to be preserved, that they should be committed to writing, which was done at an early period of the Christian Era. They are now extant in some dozen folio volumes, called the Talmud. There are pas-

sages and parables in this work of a truly Christian beauty ; but, for the most part, it is a mere compilation of petty and trifling rules pertaining to the ceremonial of religion. The character of its contents may be gathered from the occasional references in the accounts of the life of Jesus, to the traditions of the elders. These traditions were to the written Law of the Old Testament precisely what creeds, and confessions of faith, and translations, among Christians, have been and are to the Bible.

The Pharisees, a sect whose name is synonymous with Separatists, magnified the authority of the traditions, to the neglect of the written Law. Just as, in these days, there is a great zeal for the Church ; by which is meant hardly anything more than this or that ecclesiastical organization ; a zeal which expends itself in church-building and church-going, to the utter neglect of the plainest rights, and the most sacred social and personal obligations ; so, in the days of Jesus, the Pharisees were punctilious to the last degree about a mere ritual, the observance of the Sabbath, the washing of hands before eating, and numberless trivialities, while they passed over justice, and the love of God and man. When we read, at the present day, the proceedings of General

Assemblies of this Church or that, and observe their silence in regard to the greatest existing wrongs,—the wrong of enslaving men, for instance,—and the emphasis with which they condemn dancing at social parties, we must needs be reminded of those ancient Separatists, of whom Jesus said that they were very careful to strain the gnats out of their cups, while they swallowed camels without the slightest spasm.

The Pharisees looked upon the common people as ignorant and accursed. They kept them weighed down with a burthen of ceremonial observances, which they themselves extended not a finger to lighten. They cherished a boundless love of spiritual domination. The real, inmost wants of the souls of men went wholly unsupplied. The uneducated poor knew not their own need. They were overawed by the imposing appearance of sanctity worn by their spiritual guides, who were ready to persecute to the death any one who dared to question their authority, any one who showed regard for anything but appearances. So grossly was religion perverted in their hands, so entirely had it become an outside show, a corpse without any animating principle, that every touch of common humanity seems to have been obliterated from their hearts.

The difference between these formalists and Jesus struck every one at once. It was the difference between the harsh creaking of machines and a genial human voice. With what weariness and constraint the people hearkened to the common teachers of the Law, we may infer from the eagerness with which they listened to Jesus. Him they heard gladly. They crowded round him; among them numbers, perhaps, who hardly ever entered a synagogue; moved in great part, no doubt, by curiosity and a love of the marvellous. Still, it is apparent there was a power in his words that drew them to him; they came to hear as well as to see. When, to avoid the crowd, he crossed the lake, they went in pursuit of him; following him, for days together, from place to place, and forgetting fatigue and hunger, until they were ready to faint. Their eagerness touched him to the heart. He pitied them. They seemed to him, as he said, like sheep wandering without a shepherd, or like a harvest-field ripe for the sickle. "Pray ye the Master of the harvest," said he to his friends, "to send laborers into the field." It was the evident wants of the people, their manifest need and desire of instruction, that led him, as I suppose, to send abroad over the country, first his few chosen

friends, and then seventy others afterwards, to diffuse far and wide the interest which had been awakened, and to fix public attention upon the necessity of thorough reformation, in view of the portentous signs of the times, and to prepare the people for the great change which was at hand.

The enthusiasm with which the mass of the people flocked to him, awoke the hostility of the ruling classes ; and we find Scribes and Pharisees mingling in the crowd, and becoming conspicuous. He spoke of these classes, from the first, in terms of strong and unqualified condemnation. He declared the righteousness upon which they laid so much stress, and which was a mere external show and make-believe, of no value. He told the people that if they had no righteousness but that, they could never participate in the privileges of the coming kingdom. How must the hearts of the Pharisees have boiled over with wrath, when, in condemnation of such as accounted themselves religious, and looked down with contempt on others, he told a story about a Pharisee and a Publican,— exalting the one and abasing the other,— and thus insulting their whole pious body before all the world, by bringing them into odious contrast with vile tax-gatherers ! It was such things as this that

stirred their bitterest hate. Accordingly we find them, on repeated occasions, acting the part of spies, perverting his words and actions. They called him blasphemer, Sabbath-breaker, drunkard, associate of the vilest of the people, in league with evil spirits.

After a temporary retirement before the popular feeling, he returned again to Capernaum. The rumor of his being in a certain house was instantly spread far and wide, and the house was thronged, and there was no getting near the door. There came four men, bearing on a litter a man suffering with paralysis, but it was impossible to get through the crowd. The houses of the place, according to the style of building prevalent in the East, a style suggested by the climate, were flat-roofed, and the tops of the houses were places of daily resort, where families met and neighbors interchanged talk. The men who were bearing the sick man, taking advantage of this construction, carried him into one of the houses near that in which Jesus was, and passing the litter to the top of the house in which Jesus sate discoursing, broke away and enlarged the opening or door in the roof, which offered communication with the interior, and thus lowered

the sick man down into the room where Jesus was, who was evidently touched by the confidence thus evinced in him. In the fact that this poor sufferer had caused himself to be brought and laid at his feet, he read the man's soul. His penetrating glance beheld, in every lineament of that wasted countenance, the faith, the fear, the veneration, the penitence, with which the shattered frame was shaking; and he instantly addressed the paralytic in words of the greatest kindness: "Son, be of good heart, your sins are all forgiven." The man's forgiveness was legible in his whole appearance, in every circumstance of the case. But there were Pharisees, teachers of the Law, present; and when Jesus said this, they instantly knit their brows and exchanged looks of affected horror, as much as to say: "What horrible blasphemy is this! Who is this man who undertakes to forgive sin!" Jesus saw at once what they were thinking of, and turned to them, and said in effect: "What are you murmuring at? You believe that suffering is a proof of sin in the sufferer. When the suffering is removed then, the sin is forgiven, as, according to your faith, you will admit. That you may know then that I have power to declare this man forgiven," — with this, he turned to the sick man, and

said to him: "Rise up, and take your bed and go home." And he, that a moment before was so helpless that he could not move a limb, stood erect, and took up his bed and went! What a sensation must it have caused outside, when he, whom the crowd saw a little while before borne, a mere wreck, into a neighboring house, was now seen making his way out of the door, bearing his bed upon his back. The people were all amazed, and glorified God. Well did they say to one another: "We never saw anything like this before!"

It was such incidents as this, connected with the great influence which Jesus was gaining with the common people, that made the Pharisees rather shy of him. He was becoming too powerful to be let alone. Yet they did not often venture to confront him. Whenever they did cavil to his face, they were sure to get the worst of it. For the most part, they only watched him. They only looked, in silence; but he would not suffer them to look their ill-will even; he read their thoughts in their looks, and overwhelmed them with the resistless force of Truth. When they did not dare to speak to him, they went to those who were known as his particular friends. "Why," they inquired on one occasion, of his disciples, "why does he keep com-

pany with publicans and men of no character?" Publicans, tax-gatherers, whose office was so odious that, for the most part, only men of the meanest description, renegades, would accept it. How pointed his words when he was told of this inquiry! 'The well need not a physician, only the sick. I am come, not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.' The Pharisees, punctilious in rites and sacrifices, had yet to learn the meaning of these words: I will have humanity rather than sacrifice.

Again, in the spirit of the ruling sect, he was asked why, while the Pharisees and the disciples of John observed fasts, he enjoined no observances of the kind upon those who had attached themselves to him. The disciples of John were probably fasting at that time on account of the imprisonment of their master. 'Can the attendants at a bridal fast,' he asked in reply, 'when the bridegroom is in their midst? But the time will come, when the bridegroom will be taken from them, and then they will fast.' His disciples then were excited by the most joyous expectations. They were hoping that he would shower upon them the riches and honors of the coming kingdom. They regarded him as the attendants at a wedding look upon the bride-

groom. All was then going on with them gaily as a marriage bell. But this state of things—this career of popularity—was not destined to last long; and we see here how early his mind was visited with a presentiment of his death. It is as if he had said: ‘Do not talk about my disciples fasting now, while I am with them, a fountain of joy and hope. By and by, I shall be taken from them, and then they will really fast.’ He then proceeded to intimate that it was wholly out of season for his disciples to fast then. They were not in a state for such sad observances. The idea was incongruous; like putting new wine into old wine-skins, or new cloth into old garments. The bright hopes of the hour and the austerities of fasting had no consonance.

CHAPTER V.

THE SABBATH — THE PENITENT WOMAN — A SIGN
— PHARISEES BLASPHEME — BREAD OF HEAVEN
— VISIT TO JERUSALEM — THE TEMPLE — NICODEMUS — SAMARITAN WOMAN — THE NATIONAL FESTIVALS.

WE have seen that, at the commencement of his public life, Jesus grew rapidly in the goodwill of the people. They regarded him with great favor. Indeed, their enthusiasm was continually rising to such a height that it obstructed his simple work; and he was again and again compelled to suspend his labors, lest, in the ardor of their faith and hopes, they should engage in some tumultuous movement, of which they might expect him to take the lead. This popularity alone was sufficient cause for the hostility evinced towards him by the ruling religious teachers. But when, in addition to this,

he spoke of them in terms of the severest rebuke and indignation, when he warned the people against their false pretences, and when he discomfited their machinations, and convicted individuals of this class of their evil designs, their bitterest hatred was awakened, and, boiling with rage, they resolved upon his destruction.

There was no respect in which they were more eager to ensnare him and bring him into disrepute, than in regard to the Sabbath, which was held in such superstitious reverence that, as we have seen, the people would not bring the sick to Jesus to be healed on the Sabbath, but waited till the sun was down, lest the day should be profaned. We find Pharisees watching him again and again, to see if he would break the Sabbath by healing on that day. He never denied the obligation or questioned the propriety of observing the day, but he declared that the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath,—that the form must be accommodated to the spirit.

Once, when he was teaching in a synagogue, there was a man present who had lost the use of his right hand. Certain Pharisees, leading members of the synagogue, and occupying conspicuous places, were on the watch. It was easy, I suppose,

for any one,—certainly so for Jesus,—to perceive the evil motive by which they were actuated. He saw that they would willingly destroy him, if they could. But he kept no terms with them. He bade the man, whose hand was withered, stand forth in the presence of the whole assembly. When all were waiting in breathless and pin-drop silence to see what he would do next, he turned to those evil-disposed men, who were thirsting for his blood, and asked them, in effect, ‘Which now is breaking the Sabbath, you or I? I, who mean to do good and relieve this man, or you, who are bent on my destruction?’ No answer was given to this question. What answer could be given? He paused; and, after fixing a look of mingled grief and indignation on those depraved men, he turned again to the man with a withered hand, and, with that commanding tone which must have been altogether peculiar to him, beggaring all description, he said to him: ‘Stretch forth your hand.’ And the man, over-powered, stimulated, inspired, by that grand authority, stretched out his hand, and it was strong like the other! By thus laying bare their falsehood in the full splendor of his truth and power, Jesus offended the Pharisees, on that occasion, if on no other, past all forgiveness.

Again, at another time, when he was teaching in one of the synagogues on a Sabbath, there was a woman present who had for eighteen years been so bent down by disease,—a species of rheumatism, probably,—that she could not raise her body to a straight position. She had, no doubt, been long considered incurable. But Jesus spoke to her, telling her that her infirmity was at an end, and laying both his hands on her; at which she was immediately enabled to straighten herself up. The instantaneous cure of this woman, long known for her infirmity, caused, of course, a great sensation. The stir, which it made on the spot, must have broken in upon the usual monotonous decorum of the place and the day; for the ruling officer of the synagogue was enraged at the apparent desecration, and told the crowd that there were six days for work; and that then, and not on the Sabbath, people should come and be healed. At this, Jesus turned to the man with warmth, and exclaimed: ‘Thou hypocrite! does not every one of you go and loose his ox or his ass on the Sabbath, and lead him away to watering? And is not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, a sufferer for eighteen years, to be loosed from this crushing infirmity on the Sabbath?’ Thus he confounded his adversaries,

and the people exulted in the wonderful things which he did and said. As he was in the habit of attending the synagogues on the Sabbath, incidents similar to the foregoing occurred frequently. On these occasions, he did not merely defend himself, he assailed and overwhelmed all opposition.

Once, teachers of the Law and Pharisees from Jerusalem, accosted him, and wished to know why his disciples disregarded the traditions of the elders, neglecting to wash their hands before eating. With what power did he retort upon these questioners ! “Why do you,” he demanded in reply, “set aside the commandment of God, for your tradition ? God hath said : Honor thy father and mother ; and who so honoreth not father or mother, let him die the death ; but you say that, if a man will give to the service of the Temple what he might use for the support of his parents, he shall be discharged from his duty to them. Well did the prophet say of you : This people draw nigh to me with their mouths, and honor me with their lips, whilst their hearts are far from me. But in vain do they worship me, teaching for truths the commandments of men.” Upon this occasion, Jesus appears to have been so impressed by the hollow outsideness of the religious

teachers of the day, who were so scrupulous about washing their hands, lest they should be defiled, while their hearts were polluted with all manner of evil, that he took pains to call the attention of the people, and said to them: "Hearken to me, every one of you, and understand: There is nothing from without a man that, entering into him, can defile him; but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man," (the wicked thoughts that proceed out of his heart.) "If any man have ears to hear, let him hear." 'Do you know,' said his friends to him after he had said this, 'that the Pharisees were offended at what you said?' He replied, in effect, 'What if they were? Everything that is not founded in Truth, planted by God, will be rooted up. Let them alone; they are blind leaders of the blind. And when the blind lead the blind, both must fall into the ditch.' He saw that, under the blind guidance of their established teachers, the people must be led on to ruin. Here was one of the signs of the times, in which he read the coming doom of the nation.

But the Pharisees, though depraved as a body, were not all lost to a sense of truth. Some among them, we are told, were favorably impressed by the words and works of Jesus, though they were

too timid to avow it openly. Such an one was Nicodemus, who went to visit Jesus by night, and who was disposed to defend him in the meetings of his sect. Such an one, also, was the Pharisee, Simon, who showed so much goodwill to Jesus, as to invite him to his house, where that touching scene occurred, in which a woman of notoriously bad character bore so conspicuous a part.

Who can contemplate that scene without emotion? I suppose that, whenever Jesus was known to be in any house, the ordinary rules of propriety were suspended, and the place was, perforce, thrown open to strangers. A poor, heart-broken creature, heedless of the scorn of those who shrunk from her as if her touch were contamination, followed Jesus into the house, and, placing herself behind the couch on which, according to the custom of the country, he lay reclined at table, bent down and kissed his feet, upon which her streaming tears fell, which she wiped away with that dishevelled hair; once, I suppose, her pride, but now left to flow down all unregarded. She anointed his feet, also, with a fragrant ointment. The Pharisee, hospitable though he was, was shocked that his guest should allow such a woman to touch him. Jesus perceived the thoughts of his host, and said to him: "Simon, I

have something to say to you." Simon said, "Master, say on." "There was a certain creditor," said Jesus, "who had two debtors, one of whom owed him five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me now which will love him most?" Simon answered, "I suppose that he to whom he forgave most." Jesus said to him, "Thou hast rightly judged." And then, turning to the woman, "Seest thou this woman?" he continued; "When I entered thy house, thou gavest me no water for my feet, but she has washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss, but this woman, since the time I came in, has not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint, but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto you, her sins, numerous as they were, are forgiven,—she is a forgiven woman; the deep emotion she evinces, in revealing her penitence, shows also that she is forgiven, and is to be received and treated accordingly." And then he bade the woman go in peace; assuring her that she was forgiven, and that the faith she had shown in him was the pledge of that. If, as there is some ground for supposing, Simon

had been healed of leprosy, perhaps by Jesus, then the contrast, drawn between this woman and his host, is rendered more pointed. ‘If, in being healed of your leprosy,’ Jesus may be understood as saying, ‘you deem yourself forgiven for the sins of which you considered the leprosy as a punishment, and, in testimony of your thankfulness, you have invited me to your house, how much more manifest is it that this woman is forgiven, whose gratitude is so expressive!?’

Another instance, of a Pharisee, not only kindly disposed towards Jesus, but open to the force of Truth, is presented in that teacher of the Law, who, after listening to him, broke forth in assent and commendation; and of whom Jesus himself remarked, that he was not far from the kingdom of God.

And even the most bitter and determined of those opposing religionists seem at times to have given way before the mighty power of his truth. This I infer from their asking him for a sign. The Jews appear to have expected that, when their Messiah should appear, he would make some signal,—give a sign, whereby he might be recognized beyond the possibility of a mistake. What the precise

nature of this sign was to be, we have no means of determining. It was, I imagine, some miraculous appearance, corresponding to the established idea of the expected Deliverer, as a temporal prince, and rendering the claims of him who should give it indubitable. That this expectation of a sign existed, is evident from the words of Paul: "The Jews seek after a sign." On more than one occasion, Pharisees went to Jesus and required of him a sign. And it is observable that this request was always made just after he had done some very wonderful thing.

Once, a man was brought to Jesus, afflicted with a disease which deprived him of sight and speech; and supposed, of course, according to the universal belief of the people, to be under the influence of an evil spirit. In the presence of a crowd, Jesus healed the man. The cure was so sudden and so complete, that the people, overwhelmed with wonder, began to say aloud, that he who had wrought such a cure must be the anointed Leader,—the son of David. Some Pharisees, who were present, enraged at hearing such things said, and driven to extremities, exclaimed: 'No; this man must be in league with evil spirits,—with the very prince of them, Beelzebub himself;' by thus ascribing the

cure he had wrought to the chief of evil spirits, virtually admitting that it was far above the ordinary power of man. In answer to this charge, Jesus poured forth a boiling torrent of indignant truth. ‘Every kingdom,’ said he, ‘every city, every house, at war with itself, is brought to ruin. If Satan cast out Satan, how can his power stand? If it is by his aid that I have relieved this man, where do your exorcists get their power? Let them condemn you. But if I cast out spirits by the power of God, then is the kingdom of God come among you. What says the common proverb? — He that is not with me is against me. This shows that, as I evidently am not with Satan, I must be against him. But you are incorrigible. You virtually confess that the power I have exercised is far above the power of man, but you blaspheme it. You call the evident power of God the power of the Devil. What can reach you, when you thus defame God himself? You are past forgiveness; for you cannot be changed that you may be forgiven, if the acknowledged power of God cannot move you. You might speak against me, a man, and be forgiven; but when you speak thus against God himself, it is unpardonable. There is no hope of you now or ever. But what else is to

be expected of you? It is in vain to look for good from the lips of those whose hearts are so depraved. If the tree is good, the fruit will be good; if the tree is bad, so is the fruit. O ye vipers! how can ye, being evil, speak good things? Out of the evil in your hearts your mouths speak.'

I think it very plain that Jesus expressed himself, on this occasion, with the greatest earnestness. He is to be understood, not as speaking to the letter, but as pouring forth, in the strong, unqualified language of deep emotion, the indignation of a heart shocked to its very centre at the exhibition of such inveterate perversity.

But, notwithstanding, these Pharisees immediately showed some evidence of relenting. They asked for a sign; as much as to say, 'It must be confessed, you say and do wonderful things, give us now a sign; this is all we need to satisfy us.' The sign required was, of course, some miracle in conformity with their conceptions of what the Messiah was to be, a military leader and political deliverer. But as this was not the character in which Jesus appeared, such a sign as was demanded could not, in the nature of things, be given. He told them that no sign would be given them, except one drawn from the history of the humblest of the prophets;

between whose fortunes and his own death and resurrection, there would prove to be a resemblance. That would be the most expressive sign that he could give, or they receive, of his authority.

That Jesus himself regarded the request of the Pharisees for a sign as an evidence that they were disposed to yield — that their unbelief was giving way for the moment at least, I infer from his own words. He proceeded to describe the state of a man possessed with an evil spirit, — how the evil spirit appears to leave the man for awhile, and then return again with sevenfold fury. Perhaps such had been the condition of the very person whom he had just relieved. In this description, he portrayed also the Pharisees, who might seem for awhile to be deserted by the evil spirit of unbelief, but still there was no dependence to be placed on their cure. The moral disease would return in an aggravated form, and they would be worse than ever.

Is it not evident that Jesus was profoundly moved? So absorbed was he in what he was saying, that when some one, heedless of what was going on, or wishing to interrupt him, called out to him, ‘while he was yet talking,’ and told him that his mother and brothers were standing outside the crowd, desiring to speak with him; — they were

alarmed, probably, at the stir that was made, and wished to persuade him to go home with them ;— he appeared to forget that he had a mother or brothers ; not that his heart, that yearned towards his mother amidst the blood, and torture, and death-sweat of the Cross, was wanting in filial love ; but at the moment, and for the moment only, lost to everything but a sense of the Truth with which his mind was filled, he forgot his nearest natural ties. What a divine touch of Nature is here ! “Who is my mother ?” he exclaimed ; “and who are my brothers ?” And then, pointing to his friends, he added, “Behold my mother and my brothers ! for whosoever will do the will of my Father in Heaven, the same is my mother and sister and brother.” He loved his mother, and was ready to render her all that was due to her. But he loved Truth and humanity and the will of God more ; these he loved with transcendent devotion.

It was on this occasion, as I suppose, and as I have elsewhere stated, that a woman in the crowd, upon hearing his mother mentioned, broke forth in blessing her, who had borne such a son. The way in which he received this woman’s benediction of his mother discloses, I think, the same absorption

of mind in him, which is apparent in the foregoing scene. He turned to her, and said, in effect: ‘Do you call my mother blessed? Blessed rather are you, if you listen to the Truth of God and keep it.’

Three or four times, the request for a sign was repeated. Something was evidently wanted, which should be, not a mere exhibition of extraordinary power, but such an act as would show Jesus to be such a person as the nation was waiting for. This request, always coming immediately after he had done something wonderful, laid bare the obstinacy with which the people were clinging to the idea of a political deliverer. It showed that nothing he had done or could do would satisfy them, unless he assumed the character upon which their hearts were set. It showed him that the attempt to disabuse them of this false expectation was well nigh hopeless. Accordingly, once, when certain Pharisees desired of him a sign, we are told that he “sighed deeply,” and exclaimed, “Why does this generation seek after a sign? I solemnly declare there will no sign be given them.”

Once, when, by the extraordinary power with which he is so abundantly shown to have been endowed, he had, with a few loaves and fishes, fed and

refreshed the exhausted multitude who had followed him out into the desert and remained with him whole days, he was asked for a sign. It was said to him, ‘You have certainly fed us very wonderfully; but this is not enough to satisfy us that you are the Messiah, for you ought to do as much or more than Moses did. You have not done as much as he. He fed our fathers, in the wilderness, with bread of Heaven.’ The manna, upon which the Israelites were fed in the desert, now known to be a natural production, was supposed to have fallen from heaven. To this Jesus replied with emphasis, ‘Moses did not give you the true bread of heaven; but the true bread of heaven, my Father is giving you now.’ Then they said to him, ‘Master, give us this bread always.’ And he said, “I am the living bread. He that comes to me will never hunger, and he that believes me will never thirst.” Amplifying the figure of bread, thus naturally suggested, he proceeded to allude to his death; declaring that he was about to give himself up wholly, body and blood, for the sake of Truth, to feed the world. But the people could not understand him. They took his words to the letter. His spiritual meaning escaped them, and they murmured their difficulties. He told them that it was in vain that they mur-

mured; that they could not be expected to understand him; that they came after him only from a vague curiosity, to witness wonders, and with selfish aims and hopes. It was impossible that, in this state of their minds, they should understand what he was saying. No one could understand him, unless he was inspired by the same spirit with himself. His discourse on this occasion was so unsatisfactory, that many, disappointed and shocked, ceased from following him any longer; so many, indeed, that he appears to have contemplated the defection even of those who had attended him the most faithfully; for he said to the chosen twelve, "Will ye also leave me?" Simon Peter, ever forward to speak for the rest, replied, "Master, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

But what particularly strikes me in this passage of his history, is that, when asked for a sign, he was led, as on all the other occasions when a sign was required, to allude to his death. That, he truly and very naturally represented as the greatest sign that he could possibly give of his truth. He was about to give up his life; he could do nothing more or greater, to prove that he was true and heaven-sent.

As I have already remarked, it is not easy to determine the duration of the public labors of Jesus. The shortest time that has been assigned, and the most probable, for the length of his public life, is a little more than one year. Some suppose that he went about, teaching and working miracles, three or four years. The opposition which was made to him, and which his fearless speech must have greatly exasperated, was too malignant and too powerful to permit of his continuing long unharmed. I gather, that the greater part of his time was spent in Galilee, and at a distance from the metropolis, Jerusalem, where the influence of the Pharisees was most formidable. He visited Jerusalem, however, upon the occasion of the grand national festivals, of which there were four every year. But it was perilous remaining there long. His enemies there were powerful and on the alert.

At an early period after his appearance in public, he went to Jerusalem to attend at the Passover. On this visit, he attracted great attention by the extraordinary things which he did. At Jerusalem, as well as elsewhere, his steps were thronged. He visited the Temple, where he found that the money-changers, who furnished those who came from a

distance and wished to pay their dues to the Temple, with the current coin of Jerusalem, and the tradesmen, who supplied persons, resorting to the Temple to render their offerings and sacrifices, with oxen, sheep, and doves, had encroached upon the sanctity of the place, setting up their stalls and tables within its very precincts. Shocked by so glaring a desecration of a spot set apart for worship and prayer, he bade these people retire. "Make not," said he, "my Father's house a place of trade." And with this, he took a piece of cord, which, considering the cattle collected there, we may readily suppose lay at hand, and, folding it into a whip, drove these desecrators from the place. Although he could not have taken the whip without intending to use it, there could hardly have been any occasion for its use, except to drive away the oxen and sheep. For the tradespeople must have been conscious that they had no right to be there, and the concern which Jesus showed for the sanctity of the Temple, was well fitted to enlist the feelings of the Jewish populace, even if they were not already awakened, in his favor. At the first intimation of the purpose of one who had a crowd to support him, the tradesmen retreated with precipitation. A scene of temporary confusion ensued.

Tables were overturned, and money was scattered on the ground. This proceeding could not fail to make a great impression. The fact that a solitary individual apparently, without any official authority, had accomplished such a reform so speedily, bore witness to his power. He was immediately asked for a sign. It was so much in character with the popular idea of the Messiah, that he should be zealous for the purification of the Temple, that they wanted in addition only such a sign as they asked for, to be fully satisfied that Jesus was the person they were expecting. To this request, he returned substantially the same answer that he gave whenever a sign was demanded ; making an obscure allusion to his death and resurrection.

On the whole, a very favorable impression was made by him, on this visit to Jerusalem. Many who saw and heard him were inclined to believe in him.

It was at this time that a leading Pharisee, Nicodemus, made him a visit ; — private, indeed, under the shadow of night, but still most momentous, as it has proved, for thousands and thousands of men, through long generations. He sought to speak with Jesus in private, but centuries overheard him. Little dreamed the Jewish elder, that the words that fell from the lips of Jesus, at that interview,

were to sound through the world, in countless churches, for centuries, as the expression of truths of the deepest import to every soul of man, as, indeed, they are. Those words have been taken up as the formula of a doctrine, and made the occasion of mysticism and fanaticism without end. And yet nothing could well be more natural, more accordant with the character and circumstances of the parties, than the conversation which took place that evening between Jesus and Nicodemus.

It is reported by John, the dearest friend of Jesus. He was, I suppose, present. And although I do not imagine there was any one of the friends of Jesus better qualified, both by character and acquaintance with Jesus, to give a faithful report of his words, yet I think it apparent that John has given the conversation in his own way. Much, in his account of the interview, which seems at first sight to be attributed by John to Jesus, has been supposed, and I think justly, to be the remarks of John himself. Still, it is by no means difficult to gather from John's account the substance of what Jesus said to the Jewish ruler.

Nicodemus began with declaring to Jesus his conviction that he was a true man, sent from God. He evidently wished to be informed respecting the

coming kingdom. Jesus told him that it was so entirely different from what the Jews were universally expecting, that a man must be made over again, "born again," in order to understand it. As a Jew, Nicodemus was familiar with this language, in application to Gentile proselytes to Judaism, but he was at a loss to know how it could be applied to Jews, the destined heirs of the promised kingdom; and by reverting to the literal meaning of the phrase, he virtually asked for an explanation. Jesus replied: 'I do not, of course, mean that you must literally be born again; for what is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is Spirit. A man must be born again, not merely, like your proselytes, by a baptism of water, but by a spiritual baptism. Wonder not that I say, you must be born again. You need not ask how it can be. The spirit of truth, by whose influence a man is renewed, comes and goes like the wind, the sound of which you hear, but you cannot tell whence it comes or whither it goes. So is it with every one who is spiritually born. You cannot tell how it is; but, that this new birth of the spirit is real, is as obvious as the sound of the wind.'

Nicodemus being still at a loss to understand what was meant, Jesus expressed his surprise that

a Rabbi in Israel should be ignorant of such simple truths. Although Nicodemus retired with very little satisfaction, still, his friendliness towards Jesus was not abated, as we afterwards learn. He evidently cherished an interest in him, which, although he did not publicly avow it, led him on subsequent occasions to speak in his defence, and, at the last, to take part in paying respect to his remains.

It was on his way back to Galilee, after this visit to Jerusalem, that Jesus held another conversation with a stranger, which, incidental as it was, has yet been heard all over the world. The full meaning of what was said by him then has yet to be fathomed. I refer to his conversation with the woman of Samaria.

In going from Judea to Galilee, he was compelled to pass through Samaria, which lies between those two places. One day he reached a well, where he sate down to rest himself, while the friends who accompanied him went to a neighboring town to procure refreshments. I suppose he was not left all alone. John probably remained with him. While he was seated by the well, a woman came, as was her wont, to draw water. He asked her to

give him to drink. The request surprised the woman; for the Samaritans were the special objects of Jewish bigotry, because, agreeing with them in the main, they yet dared to differ with the descendants of Abraham; and, of course, as is ever the way in such cases, the animosity between the two nations was peculiarly bitter. The Christian sects, that approach each other most nearly without entirely agreeing, are always the fiercest enemies. That a Jew should speak to her, or even look at her—that he should ask drink of her—she could hardly have expected. That one of that people, so bitter against her nation, would sooner die of thirst than be indebted to a Samaritan and a woman for a drop of water, was much more likely. The woman expressed her astonishment. In reply, Jesus told her that if she knew how Heaven was then favoring her, she would have asked of him, and he would have given her living water. ‘Where will you get the living water that you speak of?’ asked she; ‘You have no means of getting it from this well, which is deep. Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us this well, and drank of it himself, and his whole household? Have you better water than this spring, which has been flowing for so many years?’ ‘He who drinks of this

water,' replied Jesus, 'will thirst again; but whosoever drinks of the water that I will give him, will never thirst; but the water that I will give him will be a well of water within him, flowing forever.' 'Give me some of this water,' said the woman, 'that I may never again be thirsty, or be compelled to come here to draw water.' Seeing that she did not apprehend his meaning, and yet touched by her simplicity, he bade her go and bring her husband. "I have no husband," said the woman. The extraordinary knowledge which Jesus then showed of her past life, filled her with amazement. She saw at once that she was talking to no common person. "Sir!" she exclaimed, "I perceive that thou art a prophet." And instantly, and very naturally, she referred to him the vexed question between her countrymen and his, as to the place where God was to be worshipped; whether on Mount Gerizim, as the Samaritans contended, or at Jerusalem. Jesus, in answer, decided, as I suppose Truth will decide most of our controversies, that neither was right; that the worship of God is living, spiritual, not formal, not dependent on place; that the time would come when there would be no worship rendered on Mount Gerizim, nor yet at Jerusalem; and that the Invisible Father was at that very hour seeking

for such to worship him, as would worship him really and spiritually. The woman was wholly unable to take in truth, simple, yet so great: and she merely avowed, in reply, her belief that there was one coming who would explain everything. To this, Jesus answered explicitly, "I that talk with you am he."

His friends had now returned with the refreshments they had gone to procure, and were surprised to find him engaged in familiar conversation with this Samaritan woman; but they said nothing. He appears to have inspired them with such reverence for him, that they did not presume to question the propriety of what he was doing. The woman, forgetting, in her excitement, her errand to the well, leaving her water-jar, rushed home to call her friends and neighbors. Unconsciously, she had drunk of the living water of which Jesus spoke, and she thirsted no longer for the water of the well. When she had gone, his attendants produced the food they had purchased; but, buried in thought, he heeded it not. They begged him to eat. But he refused. His hunger had been satisfied. The interest he had taken in conversing with the woman, the truth which had just filled his mind, had fed him. He too had just been partaking of

the living water and the living bread. "I have food," said he, "that you know not of." His disciples, at a loss to understand him, began to question whether some one had not supplied his wants during their absence; for they had left him at the well, tired, hungry and thirsty. He explained himself. 'My food,' said he, 'is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work. This it is, which I have just been engaged in, that has refreshed me.'

The woman now appeared in sight, returning with a great crowd, attracted by the account she had given of the wonderful stranger at the well. When Jesus saw the people approaching, he beheld in them a great moral harvest. The simple-mindedness of the woman not only refreshed, it exhilarated him. For the moment, all the sweat and blood, which it was to cost to prepare the field for the harvest, was lost sight of. "Look on the fields," he exclaimed to his disciples, pointing, we may suppose, to the eagerly approaching crowd, "they are white already to the harvest." All seemed to him ripe for the sickle. The chief labor appeared to him, in his then state of mind, to be over. There remained nothing to be done but to gather in the harvest.

I am unable to express the sense of truth and nature which this scene creates in me. And yet I know not why I should designate this scene in particular. The whole history breathes and throbs with life.

The Samaritans were much more open-minded than the Jews. Jesus tarried among them a couple of days; and many, after listening to him, avowed their full belief that he was the person who was to come. From Samaria he passed into Galilee, and was welcomed by the Galileans, many of whom had been at Jerusalem at the same time that he was there, during the Passover.

Again, upon the occurrence of another of the national festivals,—which, is not specified,—he went again to Jerusalem, where his life was endangered on account of a cure which he performed there on a Sabbath.

There was at Jerusalem a mineral spring, or bath, which was built over, and was approached by five entrances or porches, and the waters of which, occasionally in a state of ebullition from some subterranean chemical action, were supposed, and had, I suppose, been actually found, to be of a highly curative quality; especially when the agitation of

the water,—believed, according to Jewish modes of thinking, to be caused by the agency of an angel,—was the greatest. There was, in all probability, no precise knowledge as to the medicinal effects of this spring. Some it cured, and on others it had no effect. And when it failed, the failure was ascribed to its not being tried at the right moment, when the ebullition of the water was the greatest, and its consequent efficacy was supposed to be so too.

However this may have been, Jesus happened, one Sabbath, to visit the place, followed by a crowd. Among a number of infirm persons, collected round the spring, awaiting the agitation of the water, there lay a poor man, who had suffered from bodily infirmity thirty-eight years. Jesus had some knowledge of this man. He spoke to him, inquiring whether he were willing to be made whole. The man replied that he had no one, when the angel came and troubled the water, to put him into it, but another stepped in before him, and then, as was believed, the medical virtue of the water was, for the time, exhausted. Having drawn the attention of the man to him, Jesus commanded him to rise up; and, in order to give him assurance of his restored strength, and also, perhaps, in contempt

of the false idea of sanctity connected with the Sabbath, bade him take up his bed and go away! And immediately the man rose, and did as he was directed. Jesus, knowing the excitement it would cause, and the indignation that would be awakened at the supposed violation of the day, withdrew from the spot. The rage of his enemies was greatly stirred. They menaced his life. And when, in justification of himself, he afterwards said that his heavenly Father was always at work, without regard to days, and that he imitated his Father and did likewise, the declaration was considered as equivalent to arrogating to himself an equality with God, and the Pharisees were only the more exasperated. They were bent upon destroying him. Accordingly, he did not remain long in Judea at this time. To avoid the designs of the leading men at Jerusalem, he returned to Galilee, and travelled about there, teaching in the synagogues.

He spent so much of his time in Galilee, away from Jerusalem, the centre and heart of the nation, that, when the festival of the Tabernacles arrived, — a festival commemorative of the sojourn of the Israelites in the desert, and celebrated by the erection of tents or bowers all over Jerusalem, — the

brothers of Jesus advised him to go to the capital, and teach and work miracles there, and not keep himself retired in the country. They did not credit his claims. In reply to this advice, Jesus told them they could go to Jerusalem whenever they pleased ; that no danger threatened them ; but that he must choose his time, because he was exposed to hatred and violence. His brothers went to the feast, leaving him in Galilee. After they had gone, Jesus followed them privately. He sought to reach the city without its being known that he was coming. He was expected there ; and when he did not appear, there was much talk and disputing about him ; some speaking for, and some against him.

When the festival was about half over, and many probably had given up all hopes that he would come, he suddenly appeared in the Temple, teaching. And all who heard him were filled with wonder at the power with which he spoke ; and it was asked, ‘How came this man to know how to teach, having evidently never been educated?’ ‘My teaching,’ said he, ‘is no acquisition of mine, it is His who sent me.’ ‘And every one,’ he added, freely submitting himself to the judgment of all good men, ‘who does His will may readily see whether it be His, or whether it is my own work.’

And as he continued teaching, inquiry was made, ‘Is not this the man whose life is sought? How is it that he is allowed to speak thus boldly? Do the rulers begin to think that this is the Messiah?’ There were designs to arrest him, but no one ventured it. When it reached the ears of the Pharisees, that the people were disposed to regard him as the Christ, in concert with the chief priests they authorized certain officers to watch for an opportunity to secure his person. But he was so prudent, and his friends were so numerous, that this was no easy undertaking.

On the last day of the feast, which was the great day, distinguished by its imposing ceremonies, in one of the pauses, when the multitude assembled at the Temple had sung, in harmony with the observances of the occasion, “With joy you shall draw water from the wells of salvation,” Jesus stood up, and cried aloud, “If any one thirst, let him come to me and drink. He that trusts in me, from within him shall flow rivers of living water.” These words, sounding suddenly amidst the exciting formalities of the occasion, startled and impressed the vast multitude, and some exclaimed, ‘This must be the prophet!’ and others said, ‘It is the Christ.’ And disputes arose, and again some would have seized

Jesus; but he had too many friends, and it was not attempted. The officers, sent expressly for the purpose, returned without him to their employers, who demanded why they had not brought him. Their answer was, "Never man spake like this man!" In their vexation, the Pharisees betray their principles, or no principles. They were followers of the rich and great, and despised the common people. 'Are ye too deceived?' said they to the officers; 'Have any of the rulers and Pharisees believed in him? The people, who know nothing about religion, are accursed.'

Upon the occasion of another of the festivals, commemorative of the purification of the Temple by one of the ancient kings, the Feast of the Dedication, Jesus was at Jerusalem; and as it was winter, (December,) and the weather inclement, he kept within the Temple; and while walking in that part of it entitled Solomon's Porch, some of the Pharisees gathered round him, with no good intent. They professed themselves anxious to have their doubts dissipated as to his being the Messiah. They sought to induce him to say in so many words, that he was that personage. He told them they might readily satisfy themselves, if they really wished to be satisfied, by considering what he had

done. His life—his works showed what he was. With fearless integrity, he threw himself open to their scrutiny. ‘But you do not believe in me,’ he said, ‘because you are not well disposed towards me. You are not my friends, my sheep. All who are such listen to me, and I can distinguish them, and they are obedient to me, and I give them an imperishable life. They cannot be taken away from me. My Father, through whose providence they are mine, is greater than all, and no one can take them from Him. My Father and I are of one mind.’ In thus claiming intimate fellowship with God, he was regarded by the Pharisees as uttering blasphemy, and they threatened to stone him. ‘I have done many works of kindness among you,’ said he, ‘for which are you going to stone me?’ ‘We are not going to stone you for any good work,’ they replied, ‘but because you, a mere man, make yourself God.’ ‘Is it not written,’ said he, ‘in your Law, which you venerate so profoundly, in reference to your own rulers and judges, and unjust judges too: I said ye are gods? If those are called gods, in the Scripture, against whom the word of God came, and the Scripture is not without meaning, do you charge with blasphemy one whom the Father has sanctified and sent, because he

claims to be the Son of God? If I am not doing as the Father commands, do not believe me. But if I am doing the will and work of the Father, then, though you believe not what I say, pay respect to my works, and you will see that the Father is in me, and I am in the Father.' They would again have seized him, but he escaped unharmed.

From Jerusalem, he went into the vicinity of the River Jordan, remaining there for some time, and passing thence into Galilee.

CHAPTER VI.

THE PERSONAL DISCIPLES OF JESUS — THEIR ATTACHMENT TO HIM — PETER'S AVOWAL OF FAITH — THE DREAM OF PETER — THE CURE OF A LUNATIC — THE DISPUTES OF THE DISCIPLES.

IT is refreshing to turn from those who regarded Jesus with dislike, and who were continually misrepresenting his words and actions, and plotting against his life, to those who early attached themselves to him, and whose devotion to his person was to the last, and towards the last especially, his only earthly solace. In the artless records of his life, where truth and reality are everywhere beaming forth upon us in undecaying freshness, there is nothing more touchingly accordant with our nature, than the notices which they give us of the love which his disciples, as they are termed, bore him,

and which grew up, like a thing of nature, in their hearts ; deepening into the profoundest reverence, until, amidst all the contradiction and bewilderment occasioned by the difference between his appearance, words and actions, on the one hand, and their deep-rooted Jewish preconceptions on the other, it became the commanding principle of their being.

I suppose that most, if not all of those who from an early period were known as his friends, had been personally known to him for some time before express mention is made of them ; and that the resolution to devote themselves wholly to attendance upon him, was not formed so suddenly as would seem from the statements of his biographers. Considerable allowance is continually to be made for their way of stating things, for the dramatic form in which such simple narrators always tell their stories. Although the personal followers of Jesus voluntarily became such, yet he selected them, not merely because they were willing to leave all and follow him, but because he knew them, and saw in them such qualities as fitted them for his purposes.

He was by no means disposed, as it very plainly appears, to accept the services of all or any who might offer to attend him. While he was so wholly the Truth's, that he was sacrificing his life for it,

he showed no solicitude about the number of his personal followers. He called many, but chose few. He had friends to whom he was, personally, strongly attached; such as Lazarus, for instance, and, perhaps, Joseph of Arimathea, who do not appear to have taken any special part with him. This is a very remarkable trait in him. Individuals who undertake a work at all resembling his, are always prone to measure the merits of others by the interest they manifest in their peculiar work. They are ever apt to overlook everything but a personal adhesion to them and their methods. They are anxious to swell the number of their adherents.

But it was very different with Jesus. Instead of encouraging, he discouraged individuals, again and again, from joining him. So far from compromising the truth, or keeping it out of sight, for the sake of conciliating partisans, he stated the truth in its most repelling form, in a form likely to deter people from following him. Not for a single instant would he countenance any man in putting the slightest fraud upon himself. When the crowd was pressing upon him, excited by intense expectation of wealth and honors, he turned and said to them, ‘Whoever of you hateth not father and mother, and all that he hath, yes, and his own life, he can-

not be my disciple. If you would indeed follow me, you must consider yourself doomed to the worst of deaths, and bearing your crosses to the place of execution.' A most indiscreet way of speaking, if his object were to make friends. 'Master, I will follow you wherever you go,' said one to him. He saw that this man had not counted the cost. 'Follow me if you will,' he replied; 'but the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but I know not where I shall rest my head at night.' Another offered to follow him, but asked permission to wait until he had performed his last filial duty for his aged father. Jesus perceived that this man wanted to temporize. 'If you are coming with me, come now,' returned Jesus, 'and leave the dead — those who are as insensible to the call of Truth as the dead — to bury the dead.' 'I will follow you,' said yet another, of a like temporizing spirit, 'but let me first go and take leave of my family.' "No man, having put his hand to the plough," said Jesus, "and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." When a teacher of the Law asked him what he should do to obtain eternal life, he did not require that he should be a follower of his, but bade him go away and imitate the good Samaritan. So also, when a young man, of appear-

ance the most prepossessing, of great wealth, a youth most acceptable, one would think, as a personal follower, put the same question to him, he first told him to keep the commandments. And when the young man, not satisfied, still pressed the inquiry, Jesus then bade him dispose of all his possessions and become his disciple; requiring his personal adhesion only upon the hardest condition. Those whom he healed, and who, if any, would have been wholly at his service, he sent away.

From these circumstances, apart from his express declarations on this point, I infer that his personal attendants became such, not merely through their own goodwill, but by his selection. He told them, however, on one occasion, that he had chosen them, not they him. The selection justified his judgment. Of the twelve, one indeed proved false and a traitor, conspiring with his enemies against him; himself worse betrayed by the accursed thirst for gold. But even Judas had good in him, or Jesus would never have selected him. The vice of avarice, which plunged him into such an abyss of guilt and infamy, and has rendered his name but another word for the blackest treachery, was, I suppose, at the first, but feebly developed. But the relation in which the Twelve were brought to Jesus was fitted

to try their souls to the very core, and bring out whatever good or evil there was in them. That Peter, the most prominent among them, was led, at a time of extreme peril, flatly, and with solemn oaths, to deny all acquaintance with Jesus, shows to what a searching trial his personal adherents were exposed.

On the whole, it is quite evident that the disciples of Jesus, while they were very humble men, wholly uneducated, were yet, in an eminent degree, men of an artless and unstipulating honesty. They were singularly open to the force of Truth; as is shown by the commanding influence which his personal character obtained over them. Like the great mass of their countrymen, they were full of the expectation of the glorious revolution that was at hand. Their hearts were set upon the speedy appearance of a magnificent and heaven-anointed prince, who would dispense his bounty among the meanest of their people, and exalt the humblest Israelite above the kings of the earth. This expectation was at first the main inducement that drew them to Jesus; and the wonderful things that he did, the impression that he everywhere made, the crowds that he collected around him,— all intimating that he was the man who was to come,—

united to raise their expectations to the highest pitch. That he was the promised one, they were more and more convinced every day; and their belief that he would bestow on them honors and wealth grew daily, also.

But, at the same time, there was springing up in their bosoms a sentiment of personal affection and reverence for him, of the strength and increase of which, I suppose, they themselves were, ordinarily, scarcely conscious. It soon came to be so strong, that they learned to bear to hear him say things utterly at variance with their darling hopes; things which, if they had considered them well, would have shown them that those hopes were all futile. They learned to bear very patiently the delay of their passionate expectations, until, at last, those expectations faded away, farther and farther off, into the dim future. And although they never distinctly renounced them, to the day of their death, yet their cherished Jewish dreams, once so vivid and so near, came to be only dreams, barren pictures; and they found content and strength, come what might, in loving him, and in the power of all the truth, which, having fallen from his venerated lips, had sunk into their souls like the living words of God.

It is very interesting to observe, that the influence, which he exerted over his disciples the most powerfully, was, both on his part and on theirs, an unconscious influence. His words they were often-times far from understanding. But there was an unrecognized force continually effused from his daily bearing, his looks and conduct, that went straight to their hearts, and bound them to him with a strength of affection which stood every shock, and prepared them to die in his behalf.

From a passage which I have already had occasion to notice, we get an insight into the state of their minds during the early days of their attendance on their master. They were, at that period, in a state of delighted expectation. Occasionally he said things which they could not understand, or which, so far as they were intelligible, seemed to point darkly to disappointment and separation. But such thoughts were too repugnant to their fond hopes, too much at variance with what was actually going on, to be dwelt on for a moment. They eagerly dismissed them, and let their minds run riot in the fascinating vision of the Messiah's reign, summoned up by the miracles of goodness and power which he was performing, and by the

exciting spectacle of the multitudes that crowded to see and hear him. Amidst a tumult of wonder and delight, and the acclamations of the people, the personal disciples of Jesus were like the attendants at some proud and brilliant festival ; and Jesus was among them as a bridegroom among his friends.

After this most animating course of life had been going on for some time, we come, in the history, to an incident which constitutes, I think, quite a prominent point in their lives, and, indeed, in the history of Jesus also. The occasion to which I refer was that when, so to speak, he sounded them as to their ideas in regard to him.

In his journeyings over Galilee, he had reached Cesarea Philippi, the most northern point of that country. He had by this time gone over the whole land ; and now he was about to return towards Jerusalem, visiting different towns and villages in Galilee and Judea. He foresaw that his career must terminate at the capital. He desired to prepare his disciples for what was to take place, and so was led to question them. He wished to know from them what the people at large said about him ; whom they thought him to be. His disciples told him that some said he was John, the Baptizer, and

some, that he was Elias or Jeremiah, or one of the old prophets, reappearing in the world. It appears to have been a matter of popular belief among the Jews, that when the kingdom of Heaven should come, some, if not all the ancient prophets, would rise from the dead, and aid the Messiah in the great work of restitution.

Jesus then put the question directly to his friends, what they thought, whom they supposed him to be. One of their number, Peter, whose character stands out as distinct and individual, as if there had been an express purpose to describe him particularly, and who always took the lead, answered for the rest, and, without hesitation, declared that he and his associates believed Jesus to be the Anointed Messenger, the Son of the living God. Upon Peter's making this declaration, Jesus instantly broke forth in a fervent benediction upon Peter, exclaiming, "Blessed art thou, Simon, son of Jonas; for flesh and blood have not revealed it to you, but my Father who is in Heaven;" and laying his hand upon Peter, as we may imagine, he added: "and upon this rock will I build, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

It is hardly possible for us to over-estimate the extraordinary openness evinced by Peter and the

rest, in having come thus early to a full conviction that Jesus was the Messiah. It showed how much they had been impressed by the truth that was in his words and character; truth which wrought no effect upon the better informed. It showed how little they had been affected by those circumstances about him, which were obviously so irreconcilable with the received idea of the Messiah, that the religious leaders of the day, with all their wisdom, found it easier to believe that he was a deceiver, in league with evil spirits, than that he was the man who was to come. Peter, it was evident, instead of being in bondage to Jewish ideas and prejudices, instead of being actuated by the passions of the flesh, had that open temper of mind which is the pure spirit of the Father. This had revealed the truth to him.

From that time, Jesus, finding that his disciples had arrived at such full faith in him, began to talk more freely with them about his approaching fate. He foresaw, from the first, that he must die in the work and for the work to which he had devoted himself; that it was inevitable that he should provoke the opposition and wrath of the ruling powers of the nation, and that nothing would satisfy them but his blood. He foresaw that they would endea-

vor to cover him with shame, and that his death, under the most ignominious circumstances, was determined upon. From the first, he intimated what his end was to be. Now he spoke out plainly. He knew his own purpose. He knew the prejudices and malice of his opponents. He saw that the conflict must come, and that his own life must be the sacrifice. As soon as it became clear to him that the Twelve believed him to be the Messiah, he began to prepare them for what was coming. He told them that he should go to Jerusalem, where the religious authorities, the priests and teachers of the nation, would rise against him, and put him to death; and he declared that he would rise again from the dead, the third day afterwards.

It may be asked why Jesus went to Jerusalem, when he foresaw that death awaited him there; why he did not avoid the capital, and continue teaching and going about in Galilee and other parts of the country. The fact was, I believe, that he had done all he could do. Such was the state of the public mind, that had he continued travelling about any longer, there would have been some seditious outbreak of the people. As it was, it shows his wisdom, that he succeeded in making so wide an impression, in uttering so much truth, without

any popular commotion. He accomplished as much as he did, only by the greatest care. He had withdrawn himself again and again, to allow the excitement to subside. Had he not done so, disturbances would have arisen, and his life might have been sacrificed by the frenzy of the people, or the violence of his enemies, at a moment when he was unprepared, and under circumstances not fitted to his great purpose. Between the enthusiasm of the populace, and the hatred of his foes, he had a difficult path to follow. And he resolved, since he must perish, that the final scene should take place at the capital and centre of the nation, where his death would be public, and would occur under such circumstances as would present the great question between him and his countrymen under its true aspect. He would not permit his life to be taken from him. He sought to lay it down voluntarily and deliberately. And he did so.

When, shortly after Peter's avowal of faith in him, Jesus told his disciples that he was to suffer a violent death at Jerusalem, Peter, with characteristic forwardness, and presuming evidently upon the high estimation in which, after the strong terms of commendation in which Jesus had spoken of him, he had reason to believe that he stood with his

master, undertook to contradict and reprove him. "Be it far from thee, master; this shall not be done unto thee!" Although he believed Jesus to be the Messiah, yet he had as yet no right understanding of the office of the Messiah. He still believed fully in the kingly character of that personage, and now regarded Jesus as the Messiah in disguise. So far from dreaming of his violent death, he expected that his master would shortly invest himself with the external glory that belonged to his high office. Thinking of Jesus as he did now, he was shocked at the idea of his being treated with contumely and violence; and he expressed himself accordingly. Jesus replied to him with great severity. Holding himself irrevocably bound to meet the terrible fate that awaited him, he could not endure that it should be suggested that he was to avoid that fate. It was equivalent to proposing that he should be false to his first duty; and he spoke to Peter as if he were the Evil One himself: 'Get thee behind me, Satan! Thou art a stumbling-block in my way. You think as the world thinks, and not in accordance with God's Truth.' How different, and yet how like himself, was Peter on these two occasions! At one moment, represented as in communication with God; at the next, the

very opposite of God — of the world, worldly ; at one moment, a foundation-stone, at the next, a rock of offence. How mortified and humbled must he have been, he, who, a little while before, was so exalted by the praises of his master !

We find Jesus, after this, speaking with new explicitness ; deeming his disciples better able to understand him. ‘If any man will follow me,’ he began now to teach, ‘let him deny all his darling hopes ; let him consider himself already sentenced to a violent and shameful death ; let him regard himself as a man bearing his cross, on the way to execution.’ ‘Whosoever thinks to save his life by refusing to follow me, will lose it, and whoever holds himself prepared to sacrifice his life with me, shall find life forever. The crisis is momentous to every soul of man. What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his own life, his very self ! The Messiah is coming, the reign of God is about to commence, when every man will be rewarded according to his works. Before some standing here shall die, they will see the kingdom of God coming.’

About a week after these sayings, he took the principal three of his disciples, and retired for rest and prayer, to a mountain. How long a time was

spent there we cannot tell. While there, he once retired a short distance from his friends, and was absorbed in thought and devotion. Peter, James and John, were overpowered by the excitement they had undergone. Think what a change had come over their whole manner of life! A little while before, they were spending day after day on the Sea of Galilee, in the small employment of fishing; and one day was very much like another, varied only by the alternations of success and failure in their humble craft. But now, for some time, they had been travelling from place to place, mingling in immense throngs of people, witnessing events of the most startling character, which well nigh intoxicated them with the most splendid hopes. They had become assured that he, whom they were following, was the anointed ambassador of God, the consecrated child of prophecy. They were, they believed, on the very threshold of the time, when the venerable forms of the ancient seers of Israel would rise from the grave and fill all hearts with rapture.

Such, we have every reason to suppose, was the state of their minds, when Jesus, for the sake of the repose they all needed, and for prayer, retired with them to a mountain solitude. He had much

to think of. They fell asleep. One of their number, Peter, of a most ardent temperament, began to dream; and in the visions of his sleep, his eyes having closed, perhaps, while fixed on the venerated form of his master, and his mind being filled with the idea of the Messiah's glory, he still saw Jesus; but now all arrayed in robes of dazzling whiteness, in all that external glory associated with the person of the Messiah. And there appeared also to Peter, in his dream, two others, who, he thought, were Moses and Elias; and they conversed with Jesus about what was to take place, that mysterious decease, at Jerusalem. While he was thus dreaming, a cloud came up, and it thundered; and the sound, startling the dreamer from his sleep, was instantly connected, as is not uncommon in dreams, with an articulate voice, uttering the very same words which, as Jesus had told his friends, had rung through his soul at his baptism. As Peter half awoke, the vision was vanishing, and he cried out, 'Master, it is good for us to be here: let us build three tabernacles (or bowers); one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias, and dwell here forever, in this blessed company.' James and John, awakened by the thunder and the voice of Peter, who, naturally enough, appeared to them to be talking without

knowing what he was saying, and all prepared, after their recent exciting experience, for something startling at any moment, awoke only to fall prostrate on their faces, overpowered by fear and awe. Jesus came to them, and raised them up, and there was no one there but Jesus, in his usual garb. Peter then, with his characteristic self-confidence, told what he had seen. The vision, which may all have passed in an inappreciable space of time, as is the nature of dreams, had to Peter the vivid distinctness of reality. James and John were, of course, disposed to fall in with Peter's account without a moment's hesitation; for, though they had not distinguished what the voice from heaven said, they had heard, and been awakened by, the sound. Accustomed to refer all things to God as their Source, and not at all disposed to make light of so impressive a vision, Jesus charged them not to mention what had occurred, until after he should have risen from the dead. If these things had been spread abroad, the mistaken ideas of the Messiah, and of himself, which filled the popular mind, would only have been confirmed. His three disciples obeyed him; but they wondered, we are told, what he could mean by his rising from the dead.

The grounds upon which, after a careful examination of the records, I thus explain what is called the Transfiguration, I have stated, imperfectly indeed, but somewhat at length, elsewhere. It is not to the purpose of these pages to repeat them here. I will only remark,

Firstly, that the common understanding of the Transfiguration appears to be Jewish, and not in accordance with the character of Jesus. When he is represented as arrayed in an external brightness, I detect the working of the Jewish imagination. His light was spiritual, not material, inward, not outward. It is very natural that Peter, with his Jewish ideas and hopes, should see him thus arrayed, in a dream; but it is not in keeping with his character. The record expressly states that Peter, James, and John, were heavy with sleep; and the circumstances are described also as all taking place coincidently.

And, secondly, it is not difficult to see how the friends of Jesus were led to mistake the common for the extraordinary. It would be by no means likely, had such a mistake never occurred. With their sense of the marvellous all awakened, as it must have been, by the wonderful things they were daily witnessing, it would have been strange indeed,

not at all in agreement with our common human nature, had they not sometimes been disposed to find a miracle, where miracle there was none. Let me add the expression of my full conviction, that any one who will examine with care the accounts of the Transfiguration, seeking only to see the event as it really was, will not only be satisfied of the probability of the foregoing interpretation, but will see that it is in thorough accordance with Truth and nature.

When Jesus, with Peter, James, and John, descended from the mountain, and returned to his other disciples, he found them talking and disputing with some of the teachers of the Law, and surrounded by a great crowd. The people, not knowing where he had been, were surprised and rejoiced to see him, and ran and saluted him. He inquired what was the matter in dispute, and the meaning of the crowd. A man came forward and knelt down before him, and besought him to take pity on his son; whom he went on to describe as a lunatic, terribly afflicted,—subject to violent fits, or spasmotic attacks, which sometimes threw him into the fire, sometimes into the water, accordingly as he happened to be near either when seized with these

convulsions; and his strength was wasting away. ‘I brought him,’ said the man, ‘to thy disciples, but they were not able to cure him.’ Upon hearing this, Jesus could not repress an expression of impatience at the want of faith in his disciples and in all around him. “O faithless and perverse generation!” he exclaimed; “how long shall I be with you? How long shall I endure you? Bring your son to me.” And the lunatic was brought forward. Agitated by the presence of Jesus, he was seized with a fit, and fell down, foaming at the mouth. Jesus inquired of the father how long his son had been thus afflicted. “From his childhood,” the father replied; “if thou canst do anything, have compassion on us and help us.” ‘What is this, If thou canst?’ returned Jesus; ‘Do you believe. All things can be done by him that believes.’ “Master, I believe,” exclaimed the father, with tears; “help thou mine unbelief!” Seeing the crowd fast increasing, Jesus turned to the sufferer, and in a tone of resistless command, charged the evil spirit to depart, and afflict him no more. At this the youth cried out, and, after a violent convulsion, fell to the earth lifeless, so that many thought that he was dead. But Jesus took him by the hand, and he rose up and was well.

And when Jesus was alone with his disciples, they inquired of him why they were unable to heal the man. He told them that it was owing to their want of faith. They had been alarmed at the appalling appearance of the disease, and lost their self-possession, and, of course, the power of faith. Faith, their master assured them, was of immense power; nothing was impossible to it. At the same time, he admitted that such a frightful and violent disease as they had just witnessed, could be subdued and expelled only by such a faith as had been formed and strengthened by rigid self-discipline, prayer and fasting.

Jesus was at this time in Galilee, where he sought to keep retired, and to prepare his disciples for the fearful events that would occur at Jerusalem, whither he was resolved to go. He went to Capernaum; and, on the way, he told them that he should go to Jerusalem, where he would be betrayed into the power of the priests and Pharisees, who would kill him; but he would rise from the dead the third day afterwards. His disciples, believing him to be the Messiah, could not understand how such things could be. They were greatly disturbed, but no one dared to ask him for an explanation.

It seems very probable, after Jesus had spoken

so highly of Peter, that this disciple, who seems from the first to have assumed the chief place among his companions, became rather overbearing, and that they were not disposed to recognise his pretensions. They got into a dispute, on the journey to Capernaum, when they thought they were not observed by Jesus. Their reverence for him would hardly have allowed them to quarrel in his immediate presence, or when his eye was upon them. When they arrived at Capernaum, he inquired of them what they had been disputing about. At first they held their peace. They were ashamed to confess their quarrels. He knew what the matter was. He knew the ambitious hopes they were cherishing. They were looking for high places under him, in the coming kingdom. Hence arose jealousies among them. And they betrayed the cause of difficulty and dispute, by asking him who would be the greatest in the kingdom of Heaven. They had their hearts fixed on standing near the throne of the Messiah. And their object evidently was to ascertain from their master which of them should be first. Jesus called a little child to him, and took him up in his arms, and then said to his disciples standing around, in a manner the most emphatic: ‘Unless you are entirely changed,

unless you relinquish all these jealous and ambitious hopes, and become like this child, so far from having any rank in the kingdom of Heaven, you will not be able so much as to enter it. Whoever becomes humble and docile as a child, deeming that he knows nothing, ready to be taught all things—he is the highest in the great kingdom.' He then proceeded to declare, with the same emphasis, that any honor paid to such a childlike follower of his would be honor paid to him; and he warned them that any one of them, who misled one of these lowly-minded friends of his, and caused him to be repelled from the Truth and to go astray, as they, the disciples, were in imminent danger of doing, by their jealousies and feuds, would so suffer for it, that the having a millstone hanged about his neck, and being drowned in the depth of the sea, would be a better fate. He said that occasions of falling away from the Truth would be given by his professed disciples—that such things must come; "but woe," said he, "unto him by whom they come!" Wherefore he charged them, in the most solemn manner, to repress, at all costs, the slightest tendencies to evil in themselves; to pluck out the right eye, if, kindled with unhallowed desire, it should be leading them into sin, or cut off the right

hand, if it were extended to do wrong, rather than, by giving way, plunge themselves into a fiery abyss of woe. ‘Take heed,’ said he, ‘how you suffer yourselves to think lightly of these humble-minded, childlike ones. They are most dear to God. Their guardian angels are angels of the highest rank in Heaven; they are those angels who stand always in His presence.’

There may be guardian angels. It is pleasant to think so. But whether there be or not, it is not at all the purpose of this passage to teach that there are such heavenly ministrants watching over men. Jesus obviously meant simply to impress his disciples with the truth, that those of whom he was speaking were very precious in the sight of Heaven. In expressing this truth, he used a mode of thought, familiar and striking to the Jewish mind. The idea of guardian angels was an idea popularly received among the Jews. And when, to express a thought of his own, Jesus used the language of that idea, he did not affect, in the slightest degree, the minds of his disciples as to their belief in guardian angels; nor can we infer from this language what he himself thought, as to the existence of angels. To illustrate the case by a familiar example:—it is common to speak of the insane as lunatic; but who,

by the use of this term, is ever supposed by others, or ever supposes himself, to avow his belief that the insane are under the influence of the moon, as the term, lunatic, implies? Had this characteristic of popular modes of speech been duly considered, Jesus would never have had attributed to him opinions which belonged, not to him, but to his country and his age, and which had become so universal long before him, that they had moulded the popular language of the time and place; so that any one who thought to be understood, was necessitated to use that language, without considering himself, or being considered by others, as distinctly believing what it literally and logically expressed.

Let me remark, in passing, that here is a most important consideration, which, when once fairly appreciated, will throw great light on the record of the words of Jesus; showing us, for instance, how it is that he appears to have given the weight of his great authority to the popular idea of demoniacal possession. It is only in appearance that he has done so. He necessarily used the established phraseology of the day,—there was no other,—in regard to this point; and we are not required to suppose that he had any thought, one way or another, as to the nature of diseases. He dealt only

with facts, and designated those facts by popular terms. The pages of his history throw no direct light whatever upon the origin of those diseases ascribed, in his day, to evil spirits. We fancy, in the pride of science, that we have a wiser philosophy, but I do not know.

To return. On the occasion of which we were speaking, Jesus went on to admonish his disciples of the claims of the lowly. He had come, he said, for the sake of those who were wandering like lost sheep — to seek and to save the lost. As a man, having a hundred sheep, values them all so much, that if but one strays, he leaves the ninety and nine, and goes after the lost one until he finds it, so it is the will of the great Shepherd that not one of his flock should wander away forgotten. Since the Eternal Father loveth his children thus, it became the disciples of Jesus to take heed how they neglected or despised the humblest of their brothers. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Although, when thus admonished, the disciples of Jesus ceased their disputing, yet some heartburnings remained, not wholly allayed. Peter, it is probable, had been wounded by the remarks of some one of his fellow-disciples, whom he had irritated by his assuming temper; for he went to

Jesus, and asked how often he was bound to forgive an offending brother. In reply, Jesus told him that he was to forgive without end; not only seven times, as Peter had suggested, but seventy times seven; and then he related one of his striking parables, the parable of the servant who had been forgiven, but would not forgive.

CHAPTER VII.

JESUS PASSES THROUGH SAMARIA — CHILDREN —
THE RICH YOUTH — THE HOPES OF THE DISCIPLES — JERICHO — THE BLIND MAN — ZACCHEUS — THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN — LAZARUS.

AFTER tarrying for a while in Galilee, endeavoring to prepare the minds of his disciples for the fate which he had resolved to encounter at Jerusalem, Jesus at length quitted that country for the last time, and turned his face towards the capital. He did not, however, go directly thither. But he went through the towns and villages of Judea, teaching and healing in his wonderful way, everywhere attended by crowds, who made such demands upon him, that we can but faintly picture to ourselves the labor and fatigue which he must have undergone. He was the friend and servant of all, and was

found again and again among the forsaken and outcast. He passed through Samaria, crossed into Perea, the country beyond the River Jordan, and made every spot he visited holy forever, by the immortal lessons which he uttered as he went, and by his deeds of power and love.

He did not now avoid publicity as much as formerly ; but took special means to excite and impress the whole country. He sent out a large company, seventy of his followers, to announce the coming of the divine kingdom. He published no system of faith, no formula of doctrine, but relied in unwavering trust upon that good Providence, with which he was wholly at one, to furnish him, in its own wise and bountiful way, with opportunities of delivering the tidings of Everlasting Truth.

Upon setting out, he sent persons before him, to make known his approach and prepare for his reception. These messengers went into a Samaritan village to make ready for him ; but the people, finding that he was on his way to Jerusalem, and that he was going to pass by the sacred mount, Gerizim, where alone, as they thought, true worship could be rendered, refused to receive him. At this, his disciples, James, and the gentle-minded John, the favorite of his master, were highly indignant,

and proposed that he should call down fire from Heaven, like one of the old prophets, and consume them. ‘ You know not what spirit you are breathing,’ replied he ; ‘ I have come, not to destroy men’s lives, but to save them.’

Upon another occasion, John told him that he had found a man who undertook to cast out spirits and cure the possessed by using the name of Jesus, and that he had forbidden him, because he was a stranger, who did not keep company with them. Jesus told John that he ought not to forbid the man ; for it was evident that this stranger was evidently not an enemy, and must therefore be presumed to be a friend. He must have had respect for Jesus, or he would not have made such a use of his name.

It is not difficult to see how such a case as this happened to occur. The fame of Jesus of Nazareth, the new and mighty teacher, the wonder-worker, had spread over the country, far and wide. His name had become, in the minds of the multitude, another name for a new and extraordinary authority—a word of magical power. As attempts were made to cure the possessed by various forms of exorcism, it is natural that the efficacy of the name of Jesus should be tried,—as if there were

some occult virtue in it ; and it is not unlikely that it was used with effect, perhaps with entire success ; as those who were suffering under nervous diseases may be supposed to have been peculiarly sensitive to such an influence.

At one place, women came, bringing their little children to see the wonderful man, and to be noticed by him. But the persons about him spoke roughly to these women, and bade them take the children away, and not trouble him ; he had other and more important things to occupy his time and attention. But when Jesus saw his disciples sending the little ones away, forbidding them to come to him, he was “much displeased,” and exclaimed, ‘let the little children come to me, and do not prevent them ; for like little children are those who are of the kingdom of God.’ And he caressed them, taking them up in his arms and blessing them ; through them, rendering all childhood sacred forever, as the type of a higher and better condition of being. Every bereaved Christian mother now resigns her vanished child to the embrace of this comforting benediction.

At another time, as he was passing along in the street or road, a young man, of rank and wealth, came running, and knelt down before Jesus, and, with a countenance beaming with the ingenuousness

of youth, said, "Good master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" There was that in the manner of this young man that touched and won the heart of Jesus instantly. It was, perhaps, because he felt the manifest sincerity of those youthful tones, that he was prompted instinctively to repel the seductive flattery. "Why callest thou me good," he replied; "there is none good but one, God." He bade the young man keep the commandments; to which the young man answered that he had kept them always, from his childhood. Then Jesus told him that, if he would be perfect, he must go and dispose of all his wealth among the poor, and come and follow him. This was all that was wanting to perfect his character. But here was a sacrifice which he was unable to make, and he went away sad. He was very wealthy.

As he departed, Jesus turned to his disciples and remarked that it was hardly possible for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God; in other words, to undertake the service of Truth, which required men to renounce wealth, and ease, and friends, as Jesus himself had done, for the sake of the divine kingdom, and to expose themselves to persecution and death. So impressed was he with the difficulty which the rich, enervated by the indulgences of

wealth, must have in such self-sacrifice, especially when a youth, so amiable and so blameless, was unequal to it, that he spoke as if it were an absolute impossibility for a rich man to enter the divine kingdom. Of course, he is not to be taken to the letter. Allowance is to be made for the strength of the feeling awakened by the case of this young man; unexceptionable, to all appearance, and yet incapable of the self-renunciation required. If such an one could not enter the kingdom of God, it seemed impossible that any rich man would—that a camel might pass through a needle's eye sooner.

But the disciples, all whose ideas of the coming kingdom were identified with wealth and honor, were filled with amazement at this declaration of their master's; and they exclaimed, 'Who then can be saved?' or, to express the same thing in other words, 'Who then can enter the kingdom of Heaven?' To be saved, in their view, was synonymous with being admitted into the Messiah's kingdom. Jesus, seeing their perplexity, and knowing that the progress of events would enlighten them, simply said, 'It may seem impossible to men, but it is possible with God to save men, to establish his kingdom, even though there should be no rich men.'

in it. The look with which this was said was so impressive, that it was remembered, and has been recorded.

It is interesting to mark the natural working of Peter's mind on this occasion. He is transparent like a child. He betrayed his own art with an artless simplicity. He evidently thought to himself: 'This is very strange; the Messiah coming, the kingdom of Heaven to be established, without riches! It is high time to ascertain our position, to know what our prospects are — how *we* are to be rewarded for following our master.' And he spoke out and said, 'Behold, we have left all and followed thee, what are we going to get?' Jesus assured him, in reply, most emphatically, that they who attended him in the work of reform would be raised to great power in the heavenly kingdom, and would be made judges of the twelve tribes of Israel, seated on thrones. They have indeed been exalted to great power. The promise of their master to them has been more than fulfilled, for they became the apostles of Truth, the teachers of nations. He went on to say, that though they had forsaken all, yet, for all that that they had given up, they would receive a hundredfold, and enter upon ever-enduring life.

Perceiving that Peter and the rest imagined that they had secured some peculiar advantage by having been the first to attach themselves to him, Jesus added, ‘But many that are first will be last, and the last will be first.’ And then he illustrated this declaration, by relating a story of a man who went out at different hours of the day to hire laborers to work in his vineyard; and at the close of the day paid those who had worked only one hour, but who would gladly have worked longer, had they been hired earlier, the same as the rest; and when those who had labored all day complained because they received no more than those who had labored only an hour, their employer reminded them that they had received all that they bargained for, and that it was not for them to find fault with him, if he chose to give just as much to others, who would have been willing to work all day at the same rate had any one hired them.

By this parable, Jesus evidently meant to admonish Peter that he had no reason to expect any special advantages merely because,—not through any merit of his, but in the providence of Heaven,—he had been called among the first to labor in the vineyard of Truth; that others would come after him, as well disposed as he, who would be

equally compensated, and whose late coming would be owing to no fault of theirs. Many, called first, would disregard the call, and be among the last; and many, called at a late period, would be among the first. Many were called, but only a few really chosen;—the statement of a simple fact. How few of the vast multitudes whom Jesus himself invited to the service of Truth, did really enter it, and prove themselves to be chosen! How few are there, of the multitudes whom the Truth is now inviting, who accept the invitation with undivided hearts!

On one occasion, he was asked whether there were few or many to be admitted into the divine kingdom. He replied to this question, by warning those around him to take care and use their utmost endeavors to enter at the narrow gate; for many would think to enter in, and would not be able. The Jews at large expected to be admitted into the promised state; which is spoken of here and elsewhere as a glorious palace and a grand festival, at which the good and great of past times, saints and patriarchs, are present; and Jesus admonished his countrymen that it required the greatest pains on their part, as the gate was small, and difficult of access and entrance, and they might miss it; and,

besides, the opportunity of finding it would soon be past. The master of the entertainment would rise and close the door, and to all the entreaties of those seeking admission would reply: ‘I know not who you are.’ Of the truth of his words, the then state of things was an illustration. How few were in the straight and narrow way!

He counselled the people, at the same time, not to despair of the coming of the kingdom, bidding them to look and pray for it without ceasing. In this connection, he related the parable of the unprincipled judge, who yielded to the entreaties of a poor widow for justice, simply because she importuned him. If a man then, with no principle of humanity or religion, could thus be induced to grant justice, would God be regardless of the prayers of his children for light and life? Most certainly he would answer the desire of their hearts. Nevertheless, asked Jesus, when the Messiah comes, will he find people ready to receive him? ‘Will he find faith on the earth?’

While thus travelling about, with the probable design of reaching Jerusalem about the time of the Passover, Jesus kept reminding his disciples of his death, which was there to take place. He saw that, as he was faithful to the Truth, he must die

in its service, and he chose his own time and place. But it was impossible for them to connect ideas of shame and violence with the glorious person of the Messiah; and I suppose that what their master told them of the events to occur at Jerusalem had no effect upon their minds, except to disturb them. They could not comprehend how he who was to reign a thousand years should suffer so. They dismissed the thought as soon as it was suggested, and turned with delight to their radiant visions.

Two of them induced their mother to beg from Jesus a promise that, when he began his glorious reign, they should sit on the right and on the left of his throne, and so occupy the highest places. Jesus told them they did not know what they were asking. “Can you be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? Can you drink of the cup that I shall drink of?” In other words, ‘Can you go through such a flood of suffering as I am going through? Can you drink of the bitter cup of trial with me?’ How clearly does it appear from these words, that the power which Jesus was thinking of was a power to be obtained through suffering;—moral, not political power. The two disciples had no idea of his meaning, and they unthinkingly replied, that they were able. ‘Yes, you

will indeed go through the same baptism, and drink of the same cup with me,' said Jesus; 'but still, to sit on my right hand and on my left can be given only to those who may be found qualified therefor, in the providence of my Father.' It was not a matter of arbitrary appointment. They would rise to high places in the kingdom, who should be found worthy.

When the other disciples discovered that the two brothers had been attempting to anticipate and forestall them, they were very angry. And then Jesus gave them that definition of true power, which, were it the only one of his sayings that had come down to us, would be recorded among the deathless words of ancient wisdom. He makes a wide distinction between greatness, commonly so regarded, and true greatness. 'The kings of the earth,' he said to his disciples, 'exercise power; but it is not power like theirs that you are to exercise, but whosoever seeks to be greatest among you, let him be the servant of the rest; even as I have come, not to be served, but to serve; to give up everything, my very life, in the service, not of one or of a few, but of many.'

As he approached Jerusalem, he visited Jericho, which place is rendered memorable by two incidents

that occurred there. In the neighborhood of this city there sate a blind beggar, who, as his name, Bartimeus, is given, appears to have been widely known. He was, I suppose, a familiar object, a melancholy fixture, seated there, at some prominent point on the highway; and familiarity with the sight had blunted the popular mind to a sense of his wretchedness. The people had got accustomed to his ancient misery, and imagined that he was used to it himself, and that if an alms was thrown to him occasionally, it was all he could expect. The quick ear of the blind man caught the sound of an unusual noise, of many voices and many feet. He asked what was the matter; and was told that Jesus of Nazareth, of whom he had heard as the mighty teacher, the healer of the sick, the restorer of sight to the blind, was passing by; and instantly the blind man began to shout with all his strength, addressing Jesus by one of the titles of the Messiah,—‘Son of David, have pity on me!’ The people, as they passed, bade him hush, and not suppose that he would be taken notice of. But he minded not what was said to him, but kept calling out, ‘Son of David, have pity on me!’ It was, he felt, his last chance. He had no one to lead him to the great wonder-worker, who, he had no doubt,

must be the Messiah ; for he had restored sight to the blind. That was proof sufficient to a blind man. Jesus heard his cry. It reached an ear ever listening for the wail of human suffering ; and he paused, and bade the blind man to be brought to him. Then eager hands were extended to obey his bidding, and lead the beggar to him. The beggar leaped with joy, and left his ragged mantle behind him. ‘What do you want of me ?’ asked Jesus. ‘Master,’ gasped the beggar, rolling his sightless orbs, all in a tremor of faith and hope, ‘I want my sight !’ And Jesus touched his eyes, and said, ‘According to your faith, be it done unto you.’ And immediately his sight came to him again, and a cry of wonder and delight went up from the crowd.

On a former occasion, when a blind man was brought to him, Jesus took him apart—led him out of the town ; and when he had anointed his eyes with saliva, he asked him if he could see. The man said he could see men walking at a distance, but could distinguish them from the trees only by their motion. Jesus then put his hands again upon the man’s eyes, and he saw distinctly. The particulars of this, as of most of the incidents that make up the accounts of Jesus, are very briefly

told. In this instance, we may believe that he used this peculiar means, putting saliva on the blind man's eyes, not because there was any medical virtue in it, but simply to form a communication between himself and the man, to express his will to him ; for, as the power of vision, and of all the bodily functions, resides, not in the body, but in the mind, so it was to the mind, to the intellectual, conscious nature, that Jesus addressed himself when the disorders of the body were to be corrected. So again, when he restored hearing to a deaf man, who had also an impediment in his speech, Jesus wet his fingers, and put them in the man's ears, and touched his tongue, and looked up to Heaven, and sighed, or drew a long inhalation ; by which simple means, as the man was deaf, and could have had his faith in Jesus awakened by nothing he had heard, Jesus communicated his will to the man, made him understand his purpose, and so stimulated the man's will, the hidden spring of vitality and cure, and thus caused him to co-operate with the power of Jesus himself, in effecting the cure. But to return.

He entered Jericho accompanied by an immense throng. The crowd was so great, that a certain tax-gatherer, named Zaccheus, a man of diminutive stature, and on this account, I suppose, as well as

on account of his office, an object of public contempt and derision, ran and climbed up into a tree, to get sight of Jesus as he passed. When Jesus reached the tree he looked up and saw Zaccheus, and bade him come down, for he was going to take up his abode at his house. Zaccheus, of whom Jesus appears to have had some knowledge, descended with alacrity, delighted at the idea of being honored by such a guest. Among the crowd were many people of standing and respectability, drawn to the spot by curiosity; and when they witnessed this incident, they expressed their surprise at the selection, out of all that multitude, of such a host. I suppose only the meanest of the people would enter the house of a publican. But what took place there shows that Zaccheus was worthy of the honor that was done him; for he stood up and said: "Behold! Master, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have wronged any man in anything, I restore him fourfold." And Jesus said, "This day is salvation come to this house."

As Jesus drew near to Jerusalem, and the crowd increased, and the excitement spread, and he no longer sought to allay it by withdrawing himself from public notice, as he had been wont to do at an earlier period, the idea went abroad among the

multitude, that something great and wonderful was about to happen, that the kingdom of Heaven would shortly appear. And then it was that he told the parable of the Talents; which, being interpreted, asserts the eternal law, whereby men are rewarded according to the use made of the power originally given them; and, rightly understood, it admonished the people that their admission to the coming kingdom would be regulated by this law. In various teachings and parables, he cautioned the crowds that gathered round him to take care and watch with their utmost attention; for, much as they expected the Messiah, he would appear at a moment when they were not looking for him, and woe unto them, if he should find them unprepared! To this point looks the parable of the Ten Virgins. He told the people that when that event should come, which they were so eagerly expecting, when the Messiah should be seated on his throne, and all nations be brought under his sway, in other words, when the new era, the next age, should begin, men would be rewarded or punished, not as Jews and Gentiles, but as they were merciful or unjust; that the true heirs of the heavenly kingdom would be, not the descendants of Abraham, but those who had abounded in the

offices of humanity, who had done good to the least and most despised of mankind. By these instructions, he took the weak and the wronged under his special protection; and has, in the directest manner, taught us, of this remote day, as we would honor the highest, to be considerate of the lowest; declaring that he would account any neglect of the humble as a neglect of himself personally, and any concern shown for the poor and injured, as an honor done to him.

It may have been at Jericho, which was situated near the northern boundary of Judea, or rather, perhaps, at some place nearer Jerusalem, that Jesus received a message from the sisters of Lazarus, informing him that his friend, their brother, was sick. It is not at all probable that this was all the intelligence that they sent him, or that it was received by him without any inquiry of the messenger as to the particulars of the illness of his friend. It is only natural to suppose that Jesus learned enough from the messenger to satisfy him that Lazarus was at the point of death. He did not, however, immediately go to Bethany, as Martha and Mary, no doubt, fondly expected; but, declaring that it was rather the glory of God than death which would be the end of this sickness, he continued

two days longer in the place where he was. After that, he proposed to his disciples to go into Judea. And when they expressed surprise at the thought of his going so near Jerusalem, where, on his last visit to that place, some persons had been on the point of stoning him, he said that he must avail himself of the light of day while it lasted; intimating, I think, that his opportunities were drawing to a close, and that the night was at hand. He then said that their friend Lazarus was sleeping, and that he would go and awaken him. Their reply to this remark appears to indicate that they knew that Lazarus was very ill, and in all probability was now dead. "If he sleep," said they, "he will do well." Jesus, so John tells us, meant that Lazarus was dead. And when he found that they did not understand him, he said plainly that Lazarus was dead, and that he was glad that he was not there to heal him, in order that their faith might receive new and greater confirmation.

When it became apparent that it was the purpose of their master to go to Bethany, and expose himself to the violence of his enemies, 'Let us also go,' said one of the disciples, 'that we may die with him;' thus giving utterance to that strong personal affection, which had grown up almost unconsciously

in their bosoms, and which now led them to contemplate a fate utterly inconsistent with their long-cherished expectations.

When they reached Bethany, they found that Lazarus had been buried four days. Martha and Mary were surrounded by friends from Jerusalem, who had come to condole with them. Martha, as we may judge from the few but characteristic glimpses that we catch of her, was engaged in the active cares of the household, and she naturally received the first intelligence of the approach of Jesus. The delay in his coming they had found it difficult, I suppose, to reconcile with his love for their brother. Again and again must the sisters have said to themselves and to one another, ‘If the master were only here, Lazarus might be restored.’ The same thought burst from the lips of Martha, as soon as she saw Jesus: “Master, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died; but I know that even now whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.” In so saying, she appears to have meant that Jesus might, even then, restore her brother; but when Jesus told her, in so many words, that her brother should rise again, the idea seems to have been too much for her; and she fell back upon her faith in the final rising of the dead,

and said, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me will never die. Believest thou this?"

Jesus has been understood as if he intended, in these remarkable words, to state a universal truth, or general doctrine. Undoubtedly, a universal truth is deducible from these words: and they have the form of general propositions. But we must remember that both Jesus and Martha were engrossed with one thought, the idea of Lazarus; and that nothing is more natural than to express strong emotion or deep conviction, in general terms. Although, at first sight, Jesus appears to state general propositions, yet I conceive that he intended to be understood, and that he was understood by Martha, precisely as if he had said, 'I give life, I will raise your dead brother. Though he is dead, yet he believed in me, and he will come to life again; and you who are alive and believe in me, will never die. Do you believe what I say?' Martha answered in the affirmative; but it is evident that his sayings were too great for her — that she was staggered; for again she retreated upon her settled belief in

Jesus, as the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world. She was not equal to the great thoughts which he uttered. They startled and confounded her matter-of-fact mind; and, unable to sustain the conversation, and aware that Mary should hear these things, she retired to call her sister, who was secluded in the house, surrounded by her friends, and to whom she whispered that Jesus had come, and wished to see her. Mary arose hastily, and accompanied her sister, without saying a word. Her friends, supposing that she was going to visit the grave of her brother, followed her. When she reached the spot where Jesus was, and where Martha had left him, outside the village, she fell down at his feet, and bursting into tears, said, as Martha had done, "Master, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." And her friends, who had followed her, wept also.

This scene of sorrow—what a chord must it have struck in the bosom of Jesus! Well do we read that he sighed deeply and was overcome at the sight of all this mourning. He was then in mortal peril himself. He accounted himself doomed to death. In a few days, he was himself to die under the most appalling circumstances. There was no one to sympathize with him, and, by sympathy, to lighten

the weight which was pressing with increasing force on his heart. Had he been, on this occasion, only momentarily affected, we might suppose that he was moved to grief only by sympathy with the grief that he was witnessing. But he knew his own purpose of restoring Lazarus to life, and he knew, of course, that these mourners would soon be overpowered with rapturous joy. And though he knew this, his sadness continued. He wept. He asked where they had laid Lazarus. They invited him to visit the grave. And the persons present wondered to see him weep, and thought how he must have loved the dead man, and that it was strange that he, who had given sight to the blind, had not saved Lazarus from dying. Again he sighed deeply, when they came to the grave.

What a profound sorrow must that have been, from which the prospect of performing a mighty miracle, a miracle that would fill all the beholders with speechless wonder, could not divert him! May we presume to interpret that sorrow, and reverently conjecture what was passing in his mind, as, surrounded by that weeping company, he was going to visit a grave? Bound to his fellow-men by the strongest sympathies, he was separated from them all. None understood him. He had no one to

share either his deepest sorrows or his highest joys. Peculiarly formed to sympathize and to be sympathized with, yet, as to those things which lay nearest his heart, he was denied all the support and consolation which human hearts could have given him. He was alone in the world. The tokens of sorrow and death that now surrounded him, the sight of a grave,—with what fearful distinctness must they have brought up before him that terrible fate, that was now close at hand; a fate, to all human seeming, so dark, that it might well appal the stoutest heart! The very tenderness of nature that prompted him to pour out his whole soul for ignorant, misguided and degraded men, that nerved him, for the sake of doing good, to encounter death in any, the most frightful form, in which it might come—the very sensibility that enabled him to appreciate the sufferings of others, rendered him tenderly alive to his own solitary situation. Cherishing godlike purposes of good to every soul of man, living only to do good to all, he saw that he was soon to die a death of excruciating torture, misrepresented, reviled, and really understood by none.

But not only was he without the consolation of immediate human fellowship,—where in the past

could he find any support of this kind? There had not any gone before him, with whom he might associate himself in imagination, as every sufferer for Truth's sake may now associate himself with Jesus, and find strength in communion with beings like himself. He had risen to a height of Truth and Love, not in speculation merely, but in his actual life, whither no one had preceded him. To the highest and dearest purposes of his being he was here in the boundless universe with God, and there was no other. His position was without precedent. And the only support he had was that which did indeed support him, faith in the Invisible Spirit, the Everlasting Father; that greatest faith, which the highest intelligences can entertain; that faith which, simple and universal as it may be, in one form or another, is nevertheless so ethereal, that it requires the greatest elevation of mind, the regeneration of one's whole being, in order to seize it, to keep it, to make it palpable to the heart,—a full and sufficing spring of strength amidst the untried emergencies of being. This faith in God did sustain the man of Nazareth, as I have said. It bore him triumphantly on to the end, and changed the vile cross on which he died, into the most glorious symbol of power that the world has ever

known, and made him the guiding star of nations. But what a great nature does it imply in him, that he was able, under such circumstances, to be sustained in a way so purely spiritual!

Still, his human affections were not annihilated. They were not weakened even. They were only refined; made stronger, more susceptible. And how could it be, but that he should be painfully aware of the absence of those supports which his very nature craved? As he approached the close of his life, which was to terminate amidst agony and scorn, I cannot wonder that the gloomy prospect should have so engrossed him, as to connect itself with almost every incident that occurred. I should rather wonder, had it been otherwise. When I endeavor to image to myself the appearance of Jesus at the grave of Lazarus, and see those tears falling, and hear those heavy sighs, and trace them to the sense of his own desolation, awakened in him by the signs of sorrow and death around him, I have his nature and my own revealed to me. I enter into his heart, or he enters into mine. I understand him better, through one and the same nature, common to us all. I see that he is related to me by a most sacred and intimate tie. This view of the melancholy of Jesus at the grave of

Lazarus creates in us a conviction, not only of his reality, but of his near relationship to us all. We are brought into communion with him; and if with him, then with all the Truth and Goodness which were the being of his being.

Let it not be said that this representation of the case implies that he was overcome by a selfish sorrow. Had he been insensible to the fate that he saw awaited him, to the isolation in which he lived and was about to die, it would have evinced, not a generous, but a hard, insensible nature. As it was, there is revealed in him simply a tender, human nature. Why did he long so for human sympathy, that he wept and groaned as he thought how it was utterly denied him? It was dear to him, because he desired nothing more earnestly than to communicate to others the unspeakable good which he possessed himself. Why did he love his fellow-men, but that he longed that they should be at one with him, as he was one with the eternally Good and True? He knew what was in men. Through all the scars and defacements of moral evil, he beheld in them angelic natures, power to receive all that he had received; and therefore he groaned and wept, when he felt that in a world of such beings he was all alone, and

that he was about to be driven out of life with shame and violence.

To perceive that his melancholy was untainted by selfishness, consider that, when he was thus depressed, he had it in mind to summon the dead man from the mysterious sleep of the grave—to do a work which would make the eyes of all present dilate with inexpressible wonder, and their hearts beat with a new and wild joy. Had his tears been selfish, would they not, as he approached the grave, have ceased to flow, in the prospect of producing so grand an effect, and of attracting to himself the reverent gaze of men? The thought of what was impending over him would have been superseded for awhile by the absorbing interest of the act he was about to perform. The glorious brightness of the present moment would have concealed, for a brief interval, at least, the darkness of the coming hour.

This, this is the great circumstance, the signet of his truth: the godlike self-forgetfulness with which he wrought the restoration of Lazarus. This suffices to satisfy me that the miracle *was* wrought. Wonderful as the event was, transcending, as it confessedly does, all the limits of our experience, still, no one can pronounce it an impossibility, in

the nature of things. No one can say that there are not laws in nature by which such an effect might be produced; for who knows? Have we not had facts enough, of late, which have compelled the most incredulous to admit this much, at least: that there are laws of nature, of our own nature, indeed, mysterious in their operation, which have been hardly dreamed of by our profoundest science?

But, be this as it may, the great wonder in the account of the raising of Lazarus, the miracle of the miracle, is, in my apprehension, not the appearance of Lazarus at the mouth of the tomb, staggering in the grave-clothes, in which he was wrapped head and foot—not there does the special wonder of the thing break upon my sight. But it is Jesus himself who fascinates my gaze; and in those eyes, yet glistening with those immortal tears, in that bosom, which has scarcely yet ceased heaving with the unutterable groans of our common humanity, in the sublime self-forgetfulness with which he breaks the slumber of the dead, in the entire absence of everything like self-elation, in the simple, unborrowed majesty, with which the thing is done, I behold incarnated the purest spirit of the very same power which is working miracles just as real, only, alas! for our blindness, more familiar, at this

very moment, and at all moments, all around and within us. I see God, the very same God, who is working everywhere in this boundless universe, that stretches and towers so grandly all about us,—I see him as truly, nay, even more fully, in Jesus at the grave of Lazarus, than anywhere else within the sphere of my vision ; or, if the phrase is preferred, I see Nature, in its inimitable simplicity and power, as clearly as I see it in anything that exists. And, seeing God in the godlike spirit of Jesus, I cannot wonder that he that was dead came forth. The wonder would have been, had he not come forth ; for when Nature commands, when the omnipotent God speaks, his voice must be obeyed.

Let not the story of Lazarus, then, be accounted a fiction. Show me first the man that is able to conceive of a new substance, a new plant, a new particle of the vilest dust, having no prototype in any previously-existing atom of matter ; and then I may begin to doubt the truth of this account. I could just as easily believe in the ability of the human mind to imagine a new animal, which, while it should be, in all its habits and structure, an original creation, different from all other animals, should yet harmonize with all, and with all nature, as I could in the power of any mind, however in-

genious, to represent such an act as the raising of Lazarus, at once so thoroughly original, and so thoroughly natural, if that act were not real. How much more apparent becomes the impossibility of such a fiction, when we consider the whole character of Jesus, on the one hand, and see, as we may, how, from those brief and careless records, we may gather the idea of a being, complete, and in keeping with himself and with all things, and not only so, but a new illustration of the truth of nature; and, on the other hand, the character of the age and people, uncultured and superstitious, among whom he appeared. That there may be a mixture of the fabulous in the history of Jesus, I do not deny, I admit to a certain extent. It would be strange, were it not so. But still, that the story, substantially, in regard to all the principal facts, should be fictitious, is just as impossible as that we should be able to imagine a new creature.

But I have wandered far. We left Jesus and the mourning company at the grave of Lazarus. It was a cave closed with a great stone. Jesus directed the stone to be removed. Martha, constitutionally incapable of that profound reverence which characterized her sister, and which forbade Mary to question the propriety of anything he

might do, interfered, suggesting that as Lazarus had been so long buried, the corpse must be offensive. ‘Have I not told you,’ said Jesus to her, ‘that if you would believe, you should witness the glorious power of God?’ And then he raised his eyes to Heaven, and said, “Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me, and I know that thou hearest me always, but, for the sake of these who are standing here I thank thee, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.” And when he had so said, he called out with a loud voice, “Lazarus! come forth! And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes, and his face was bound about with a cloth.” At the apparition of the dead man at the mouth of the sepulchre, struggling, in the ample folds of his shroud, to get free, the people stood transfixed with amazement and fear. Jesus recalled them to their senses, by calmly bidding them go to the assistance of Lazarus, and unloosen the grave-clothes, and set him free.

Lazarus had fallen asleep in Jesus, and with the image of his venerated friend cherished in the innermost shrine of his life. He had died with that living principle of faithful affection in his heart, which is out of the reach of all physical changes.

He was in close and vital sympathy with Jesus. We know nothing of death, except in its effect on the body. We can mark the instant the physical functions cease. But we do not know at all how death affects the intellectual being; whether the connection of that with the body is severed irreversibly when the heart ceases to beat, or whether the interior life retires gradually from its fellowship with the physical frame.

Believing the resurrection of Lazarus to be a fact, I infer from it that the connection of the body and the mind is not so entirely and instantaneously destroyed by what we pronounce death, but that, under such conditions as were fulfilled in the case of Jesus and Lazarus, the mind may be remanded, some days after death has occurred, to reanimate the lifeless body. Lazarus had sunk into the last sleep with that confidence in his revered friend, by which Jesus himself had just said that, though he were dead, he should yet live again; and which caused the loud command of that beloved voice to reach Lazarus, asleep in death, and be heard by him and obeyed. And it was on account of this faith in him, which Lazarus cherished, that Jesus thanked God that He had heard him. It certainly was not merely for the opportunity of raising a dead

man that he gave thanks. If he had sought such an opportunity, he could have had it at any time. But, as I conceive, he rejoiced that, in God's good providence, the dead man was one who had died in faith, and whose faith rendered it possible for him to be heard and obeyed, even in the realms of death. Jesus was always praying for opportunities to manifest and deepen the force of Truth; and now an occasion had come, when the Truth could be illustrated by the power of a faith which had Truth for its object and end; and not mere power, but the power of faith, would be seen; and for this he thanked Heaven.

It may be asked how this explanation meets the other cases of the raising of the dead. Jesus raised two others. There is no mention of any faith which they cherished in him. No, but they were both young persons; one was a little girl of twelve years of age, and the other is represented as a young man. How young we do not know. But we know this, that Jesus spoke in a peculiar manner of the young; describing little children as the representatives of the kingdom of God; and his words were never without meaning. Between him and the young, then, there was a living sympathy. They were in the same sphere. They

were related to one another by indestructible ties. And we may believe that the widow's son, whom he recalled to life, was neither so old, nor yet, before he died, buried so deeply under the materializing influences of the world, nor, when Jesus met his bier, so long dead, but that the voice of Jesus, expressive of the mighty power of faith, could reach him and summon him back.

In all these cases, let it be considered that Jesus spoke to the dead. He called to them, and they awoke. Now let it be, after all that has been suggested, that we cannot form the slightest shadow of a conjecture as to the manner in which they were restored to life, nevertheless my reverence for the singleness of his character utterly forbids me to consider him as speaking, and speaking, too, so earnestly and authoritatively as he did, when he commanded the dead to live again, if he did not know that he would be heard. He spoke then, as always, in perfect good faith; and although we may be entirely at a loss to conceive how the dead could hear, yet I must believe that they did hear him, and that the word of authority which he spake to the dead, brief as it was, was the true expression of the power by which the mighty wonder was wrought, and not a mere show or magical formula,

having no natural, but only an arbitrary connection with the efficient cause of these miracles.

The voice of Jesus! It penetrated the grave. It is sounding through the ages, speaking the Everlasting Gospel of Truth, awakening the Divine Life within us; now wrapped all around with the shroud of death, and slumbering in the grave. He calls it to come forth, and he commands it to be set free.

CHAPTER VIII.

A COUNCIL OF THE PRIESTS — JESUS AT BETHANY
— MARY — PUBLIC ENTRANCE INTO JERUSALEM
— GREEKS — PHARISEES — THE LAST SUPPER —
JUDAS — CONSOLATIONS — PRAYER.

MANY of the friends of Martha and Mary, who had come from Jerusalem to visit them, and who were present at the grave of Lazarus, impressed by the mighty wonder, avowed their belief that Jesus was true, and from God. But some of them returned to the city, and informed the leading Pharisees of what had taken place.

The Pharisees and the priests met in council, to consider what was to be done. The popularity of Jesus, and the impression made by the wonders he was working, excited the greatest alarm, lest he should carry the mass of the people with him, and

provoke the jealous power of Rome to exterminate the whole nation. Not all the members of the council, however, were hostile to Jesus. Some, we may suppose, were for moderate measures, and some for doing nothing. But the chief priest overruled all opposition, and brought the assembly to a decision, by insisting that Jesus should be put to death; that one man should die to save the whole nation.

John, who tells us of this council, struck with the coincidence between the opinion expressed by Caiaphas, and the actual fact, that Jesus did sacrifice himself for the sake of the people, has represented the priest as unconsciously speaking in the prophetic spirit of his sacred office.

These powerful enemies of Jesus resolved that he should be arrested the first opportunity that offered, and be put to death. They did not dare to lay hands upon him in public, and in open daylight, for fear of a popular tumult; and had it not been for the treachery of one of his disciples, a much longer time might have elapsed before the person of Jesus would have been secured.

Knowing the deadly enmity he had excited, and the power of his enemies, he avoided showing himself in public. He retired for a little while, with

his disciples, from the neighborhood of Jerusalem, and waited for the festival of the Passover.

What with the impatient enthusiasm of those who favored him, on the one hand, and the fierce hostility of the priests and Pharisees, on the other, his position was full of difficulty and peril. He saw, with all his wisdom, and even because of his wisdom, that he could not long continue the work of Truth and Beneficence in which he was engaged, without coming to an issue fatal to his own life; and he appears to have resolved that his career should terminate only under such circumstances as would give the greatest possible publicity and effect to Truth and to his labors. Through his extraordinary insight, he saw clearly that, so far from being defeated by death, he would give a new and commanding authority to the words that he had spoken, and to the life he had led, by dying as he was about to do. He saw and he declared that the fate he was to undergo would seal his triumph forever.

It was the custom of the people to resort to Jerusalem some days before the Passover, to prepare themselves, by religious rites, for a due observance of that great occasion. Numbers had gathered at the capital from the country, with this design; and

a good deal of curiosity was expressed as to whether they might look for Jesus. It was known that the religious authorities had determined to arrest him, and therefore people wondered whether he would make his appearance.

About a week before the Feast, he visited his friends in Bethany, which was only a few miles distant from Jerusalem. He was there hospitably entertained. A supper was made for him. While at supper, Mary, the sister of Lazarus, who appears to have regarded Jesus with such reverence, that, when he visited them, she was wont to take her place at his feet, listening to every word that he said, forgetful of all else, and to the annoyance of her active sister, Martha, who immediately set about the offices of hospitality, on this occasion brought an alabaster box of very costly ointment, so rich that the odor of it filled the whole house, and broke it, and poured it upon his head. This she did merely to express her reverence for him. But one of his chosen disciples, the unhappy victim and slave of avarice, was angry at such a waste, and hid his meanness under a pretence of concern for the poor; to whose relief, the ointment, as he said, had it been sold, might have been better appropriated. There can be no doubt that the pene-

trating eye of Jesus saw clearly into the heart of Judas, and he knew the evil passion by which he was actuated, and what would be its fruits. He said nothing, however, in condemnation of his false disciple, but only defended the act of Mary. He appreciated the sentiment of respect and affection by which she was prompted. But, at the same time, there was continually present to his mind, his near and melancholy fate. And the ointment, of a kind so costly as was, I suppose, rarely used for the living, but most often reserved for the dead, had to him the odor of death. It smelt to him of the tomb; and it was as if Mary were embalming him, preparing him for the grave, which he knew was now very near. ‘Let her alone,’ said he; ‘against the day of my burial hath she kept this. For the poor you always have with you, you will always have opportunities of testifying your sympathy with them; but you will not always have me here; soon you will have no opportunity of showing me any regard.’ The allusion to his approaching death is slight, but it is full of significance.

Judas, blinded by the insane love of money, and enraged that Jesus should have countenanced this waste, began from this time to meditate treachery. Acquainted with all the places which his master

was wont to frequent, he sought an interview with the priests, with whom he bargained his services for gold.

As soon as it was known in the city, that Jesus was at Bethany, crowds went thither from Jerusalem, to see, not only Jesus, but Lazarus also ; and those who saw Lazarus, and became acquainted with the circumstances of his restoration to life, were so much impressed thereby, that the priests consulted as to the propriety of securing Lazarus also, and putting him out of the way.

When it became known that, on a certain day before the Festival, it was the intention of Jesus to go to Jerusalem, the strangers who were in the city, waiting for the holidays to begin, and who had come from Galilee and other parts of the country, and were acquainted with his teachings and works, went out to meet him, with branches of the palm tree, and acclamations of welcome. Jesus, perceiving that publicity could no longer be avoided, and no longer desirous of doing so, sent his disciples to procure an ass, upon which he might ride into the city. This animal, upon which the ancient kings of Israel were accustomed to ride in times of peace, and when on journeys of peace and not war, signified to the whole people, friends and foes, the

pacific spirit of the prophet of Nazareth, and was fitted, and, I think, expressly designed by him, to allay any disposition to violence in the populace.

As the vast throng approached the city, so dear and holy to the heart of every Jew, they burst forth into enthusiastic shouts, cheering him as the long-expected Messiah, throwing down their palm-branches in his way, and spreading their garments for him to pass over. Some of the Pharisees, who had mingled with the crowd from curiosity, if with no worse design, called to him to observe what the people were saying, and to check them. "I tell you," said he, "that if these were to hold their peace, the very stones would cry out;" intimating, I think, that only hearts harder than stone could keep silent, after such demonstrations of truth and power as had been witnessed.

When the city, with its magnificent Temple, the scene and the monument of the renown of Israel, and to which the nation looked with an idolatrous affection, opened upon his sight, and, in prophetic vision, he beheld the Roman eagles hovering over their destined prey, ready with bloody beaks to rend and tear it, he burst into tears, and exclaimed, 'O Jerusalem! Jerusalem! how often would I have gathered your children together, as a bird gathereth

her young under her wings, and ye would not ! Hadst thou but known thy true peace, even now, but now it is hid from thine eyes ! The days are coming, when thine enemies will lay siege to thee, and level thee with the ground, and thy children within thee, and will not leave one stone upon another, because thou wouldest not discern the time of thy salvation.' As the multitude, descending from the Mount of Olives, gazed upon the holy city, it shone in the blended glory of the future and the past. To their expectant sight, a new day was breaking over its glittering pinnacles upon the long night of national subjection. But Jesus, all unmoved by the homage of the people, which only rendered more manifest the falsehood of those hopes that sealed the ruin of his country, was weeping ; for he beheld the glory of Israel departing forever, to be succeeded by woe and ruin.

As the mighty procession entered the city, as their shouts came, like the roar of billows, on the ears of the inhabitants, the whole city was moved, and people, unprepared for such an imposing demonstration, wondered who it could be ; and the multitude, composed in great part, as I have said, of persons from the country and from Galilee, replied, ' It is Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth of

Galilee.' To the proud citizens of Jerusalem it might well seem a very mean affair; for they despised the Galileans, and Nazareth most of all. But so strongly did the popular tide run in his favor, that his enemies were ready to despair of being able to resist it. It seemed to them, we are told, as if the whole world were taking sides with him.

Upon entering the city, he went to the Temple. Again the money-changers and trades-people, in the blind eagerness of their pursuit of gain, and in the zeal of competition, had erected their booths and stalls within that sacred enclosure; and again he compelled them to retire, and would not allow so much as any vessel to be carried through the Temple. If, in his solicitude for the sanctity of the place, traces of his Jewish origin and culture are thought to be perceptible, still, the wonder is, not that he had so many, but that he had so few of the peculiarities of his age and country.

In the Temple, a crowd of children thronged around him; and, as is always the way, catching the spirit and the word from older people, shouted their shrill Hosannas, and hailed him as the Messiah. The Pharisees, outraged by this profane clamor, so it seemed to them, wanted Jesus to put

a stop to it. "Have you never read," replied he, "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?" His enemies would willingly have seized him, but it was in vain to attempt it while the whole people seemed to be with him. He continued the remainder of the day teaching in the Temple.

There were some foreigners at Jerusalem, natives of Greece, who, with the characteristic curiosity of their country, had come to Judea, to note, I suppose, the manners and customs of this strange people; and were travelling, probably, as was the practice much more, and for obvious reasons, in ancient times than in modern, for purposes of education. Witnessing the excitement produced by the teacher and prophet from Galilee, they solicited, through his disciples, an interview with Jesus. Curious as they were to see him, they little imagined that all the renowned philosophers of their native land were destined to be eclipsed by this unlettered Galilean. Whether their curiosity were gratified or not, we are not told. When their wish was mentioned to Jesus, it appears, by what he is recorded to have said, as if the desire of these strangers to see him only impressed him with a new sense of the fearful fate that awaited him, and by

which his glory was to be made manifest, and the labors of his life were to be crowned with success. Then it was that he made that remarkable declaration, remarkable for its deep, prophetic wisdom: “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.” ‘As it is necessary that the seed should be buried in the earth and decay, so I must perish, that the fruits of my life may abound.’ Neither the interest shown in him by these Greeks, nor the acclamations of the people, could make him forget the terrible death that was impending, and the necessity there was for suffering, if true glory, honor with the Father, were to be attained.

So vividly, at this time, did the vision of his dark destiny rise before him, that he became agitated, and exclaimed, ‘I am distressed, and what shall I say? Shall I pray to escape the coming hour? But for this very hour have I come thus far. Father, glorify thy Truth, without regard to me.’ At that instant, thunder, distant it may have been, was heard; so, at least, it appeared to the people standing by. Some exclaimed that it was an angel speaking to him. It was interpreted as the assenting answer of Heaven to his prayer. Jesus, seeing how those around him were startled

by such a sound at such a moment, disclaimed it as a token intended for him ; it came, he said, for their sakes.

At the close of the day, Jesus retired from the city to Bethany, where he spent the night. No doubt, there were those in Jerusalem who would gladly have received him into their houses ; but he knew that his enemies were on the watch, and he preferred to withdraw from the city at night.

For a day or two afterwards, he went into the city and taught ; the people crowding to hear him. Then he related those parables, which point, with a significance not to be mistaken, at the religious teachers of the day, and show how fully he was aware of their violent and deadly designs. Then it was, also, that he foretold the coming destruction of the Temple and city, the appearance of many pretenders to the office of the Messiah, and the times of suffering and persecution that were to arise, when falsehood and treachery would abound among the nearest friends, and when, so complete would be the darkness and the ruin in which the nation was to be involved, that it would seem as if chaos had come again.

I cannot venture to interpret the prophetic language of Jesus with any particularity. So much

as this is clear, that the coming events, of which he spoke, were events which were to happen, as he said, in that generation, and which were visible to him in the existing signs of the times. I am satisfied that Jesus himself regarded the coming of the Messiah, or of the kingdom of Heaven, not as the appearance of a person, but as the manifestation of the power of Truth. His disciples, however, without an exception, and long after his final disappearance, firmly believed that he was about to come back in that visible splendor, in which the Messiah had always been portrayed to their Jewish imaginations. In his private conversations with them, just before he was arrested, he told them that he would come to them just as God would come, and dwell in their hearts, if they only treasured there his sayings; he would be present with them and in them, in the light and life of the Truth. While his thoughts were so spiritual, and theirs so Jewish, it becomes us to receive with caution the reports which they have given of his language.

The Pharisees, not venturing to seize him, undertook to ensnare him in his talk; but, baffled and silenced in such attempts, they soon ceased from them altogether. It was with this design, that certain of this sect joined with some partisans of

Herod, who was in favor with the Roman government, to lay a trap for him. The Pharisees considered the Roman tax as unlawful; and this was a popular opinion. The Herodians maintained the lawfulness of paying the tax imposed by the Gentile emperor. Approaching Jesus with expressions of personal respect, with a compliment to his fearlessness, they desired to know whether he considered it right to pay tribute to Cæsar. He saw through their duplicity, and detected their aim. They fancied they were sure of catching him by his answer. If he should say it was not lawful to pay the tribute, he would make the party of Herod his enemies, and might be charged with uttering treason. If he should say that it was lawful, he would offend the people. He repelled with severity the professions of respect made by these questioners. ‘You hypocrites!’ he exclaimed, ‘why are you trying me?’ And then he bade them show him a piece of the Roman coin, in which the tribute was paid. They produced a penny. “Whose,” he asked, “is this image and superscription?” “Cæsar’s,” they replied. “Render, then, to Cæsar what is Cæsar’s,” he said, “and to God, what is God’s.” Confounded by this answer, they retired in silence. By using Roman money, the Jews virtually acknowledged

themselves subjects of the Roman power. The tribute paid to the Temple could be paid only in Jewish coin, on which no Gentile image was stamped. "Wherever the coins of any king are current," says Maimonides, a high Rabbinical authority, "there the people acknowledge that king as their lord."

The Sadducees, also, a sect distinguished for denying the doctrine of immortality, also attempted to silence him, but were discomfited. No one could answer or question him. But not only did he silence his enemies, he fulfilled the prediction of John, baptizing with wind and fire from Heaven. He poured out upon his opposers his burning denunciations, exposing their folly and blindness, and laying bare the falseness of their pretensions to sanctity: seekers of popularity were they, he said; making a show of their religion, compassing sea and land to make proselytes, whom they made worse than themselves; hankering after wealth, beguiling the poor out of their money, magnifying trifling distinctions; whitened sepulchres, fair to see, but inwardly full of dead men's bones; raising monuments to the prophets whom their fathers persecuted, and persecuting the prophets of their own day to the death. If anything could exasper-

rate them to the last degree, it was this bold and severe speaking. If there had been any wavering of their hostile purpose before, his doom was sealed from this hour. The priests resolved to seize him before the Festival, in order to avoid a popular tumult.

Desirous of spending the last hours which he had at his own disposal, with the small company of his personal disciples, and aware of the designs that were formed against him, knowing that Judas was only waiting for an opportunity to give him up into the hands of the priests, he sent two of his friends to obtain a room, where they might meet in preparation or observance of the Passover. When all was made ready, on the day of the week corresponding to our Thursday, he sate down to supper with the Twelve. To him it was an occasion of most tender and melancholy interest, the last time he was to spend with them alone. He told them he had looked forward to it with the greatest desire, that it was the last time he should eat and drink with them before the coming of the heavenly kingdom.

As he presided at the table, when he came to break the bread and pour out the wine, accustomed to see spiritual resemblances in all things,

the prospect of the death he was on the point of suffering, standing grimly before him, he saw in the bread and wine, which feed and refresh men, types of his own body, about to be broken, and his blood, about to be poured out, on the cruel cross, for the sustenance of the world; and, in the intensity of his mental suffering, yearning for the dear solace of human sympathy, he expressed his earnest desire to be cherished in affectionate remembrance by his friends, when they should eat and drink together, as they were doing then, and he should no longer be present. They could not then enter into his heart, or dream what a burthen it was sustaining; of course, they could not comfort him as he would gladly have been comforted. How much he valued human sympathy, let his ready acceptance of Mary's costly offering remind us. He longed, as it seems to me, to throw himself upon their bosoms, and to feel himself in the soothing embrace of their affection. But as they could not understand him then, as they were then far, far less prepared than he was for what was at hand, as he knew that, in a few hours, they would all flee, and leave him alone in the hands of his enemies, he sought the only human support that was within his reach, in the prospect of being cherished there-

after, in grateful and loving remembrance. That vision of future sympathy, that shadow of human consolation, was all that this world had to give him; and thus, I conceive, was he prompted to ask them to connect the thought of him with the bread and the wine of which they might partake, when they should meet together, and he should no longer be present in person. This request of his shows this much, at least, that he had no idea of returning to them personally, as they confidently expected.

So little were they aware of the fearful events that were close at hand, that their jealousy of one another betrayed itself even at this late hour, and while the heart of Jesus was overshadowed by the deep gloom of the near cross. I suppose that there was some contention among them for precedence at the table. We are told in the record, that they disputed which was the greatest in the kingdom of Heaven. That such was the nature of their contention, a struggle for places, seems to be intimated by the way in which their master proceeded to correct them. They sought pre-eminence of place at supper. He performed for them the office of a menial at the table. But be this as it may, if they showed a jealous rivalry when they first gathered round the table, Jesus permitted it to pass unnoticed

at the moment; but afterwards, at an interval, when the formal supper was over, he rebuked their selfish ambition in a manner never to be forgotten. He silently rose from his place, and laying aside his principal garment or mantle, and taking a basin and towel, he knelt down, and began to wash their feet! Struck dumb in a perplexed astonishment, revering him too profoundly to dare to question, or inquire even, what he meant, they submitted, one after another, in silence, exchanging looks of wonder and curiosity, until he came to one, who could not possibly repress his emotion, and whose ardent temper, breaking out on every occasion, causes us to recognize him at once. ‘Master!’ exclaimed Peter, drawing away his feet; ‘are you going to wash my feet?’ ‘What I am doing,’ replied Jesus, ‘you do not understand now, but you shall know by and by.’ ‘You shall never wash my feet!’ protested the disciple. ‘If I do not wash you,’ said Jesus, with, I cannot but think, most significant emphasis, ‘you can be no friend of mine.’ ‘Master!’ cried the other, ‘not my feet only, but also my hands and my head!’ I see the warm-hearted disciple, stretching out his hands and his feet, offering his whole person for the welcome office that should make him his master’s friend. ‘He that is

washed,' answered Jesus, 'needs not to be washed with the exception of his feet:' i. e. a person who has bathed requires only to have his feet washed, — as, when sandals were worn, which protected only the soles, the feet might soon become soiled with dust. 'And ye are washed,' added Jesus, 'ye have been bathed in the cleansing waters of Truth, but not all;' making a distant allusion to Judas.

After Jesus had gone round, performing the same humble office for all, he resumed his mantle and his seat, and then explained what he had been doing. 'Do you understand what I have just been doing to you?' he asked; 'You call me master and lord, and you say, well, for so I am. If I, then, your lord and master, have washed your feet, you ought also to be ready to wash one another's feet. I have given you an example, that you should yield and defer to one another, and be the servants, each of all.' Thus he adopted the most impressive way possible, to show them how entirely out of place their mutual jealousies were. Certainly they received on this occasion a lesson which they were not likely ever to forget.

After this admonition, he told them that he was not speaking to them all, that he knew the characters of those whom he had selected, that the words

of the ancient Scripture were then and there applicable: "He that eateth bread with me, hath lifted up his heel against me;" i. e. 'A familiar friend, who shares my bread with me, is trying to overthrow me.' 'I tell you of this,' he added, 'before it takes place, so that, when it has taken place, you may recollect that I told you of it; and understand that I knew it all, and so have your confidence in me unshaken.'

It is touching to observe the manifest reluctance with which he alluded to the treachery of one of his chosen disciples. He referred to it, the first time, very distantly. The second time he expressed himself more plainly. And finally, he was troubled in spirit, deeply moved, agitated, when he spoke out distinctly, and told them that one of them was about to deliver him into the hands of his enemies. He had no pleasure, but it wounded him very deeply to mention the fact. The grief which the treachery of Judas caused him, shows that although he had, at an early period, discovered the real character of the false disciple, yet he had once regarded Judas as a friend. His sole reason for referring to him at all, was the reason which he gave: that his friends might know that he had not been taken by surprise, and retain their faith in him unshaken.

The veneration with which they regarded him,—how incidentally and yet how clearly is it revealed in the way in which they received this communication! All but Judas must have been conscious that they entertained no evil design against their master. Yet, when he said that one of them was about to prove false to him, they did not resent the accusation. They knew that he knew them better than they knew themselves; that, all unconscious as they were of any such treacherous purpose, it was, nevertheless, far more likely that they would prove false, than that he should utter a groundless charge. And accordingly, they ask, one after another, “Master, is it I? Master, is it I?”

Next to Jesus was his favorite disciple, John, who, reclining at table, according to the custom of the time, lay so that his head rested on the breast of Jesus. Peter beckoned to John to ask their master who it was of whom he spake; and John put the question to Jesus in a whisper: ‘Lord, who is it?’ Aware, as I suppose, that he was observed, that Peter and others were watching to hear what he would answer, and not wishing to excite them against Judas, having no purpose but simply to let them know that he knew beforehand what was going to take place, he answered John in a whisper, say-

ing: ‘Observe to whom I give this piece of bread, when I have dipped it;’ and taking a piece of bread, and dipping it, as I suppose was a custom, into the dish, he handed it to Judas. John turned to look at Judas, whose countenance, even though it were not darkened by the evil passions raging like demons in his soul, must have presented a totally new and changed expression to the amazed eyes of John, who, with striking truth of language, has said in his wonderful narrative of these incidents, that, “after the sop, Satan entered into Judas.” John saw the devil in the face of Judas. The traitor, thus brought face to face with Jesus, was forced in a manner, for appearance’s sake, to take up the general question; and he, too, hoarsely whispered, “Master, is it I?” Jesus answered in the affirmative; adding, in a low, rapid tone, ‘Whatever you are going to do, do it quickly.’ It is apparent, from this remark, that the agonizing suspense of his situation was beginning to weigh heavily on Jesus, and that he longed to have the horrible scene over. No one at the table, except John, knew what was meant. They supposed Jesus was giving Judas some directions about the Feast.

Judas instantly rose and went out; “and,” the artless narrative adds, “it was night.” Night, in-

deed! night of blackness and storm, night of hell, in the bosom of the traitor, plotting against his best friend, the holiest of the sons of men! He had had until this moment, I suppose, only a general, undefined purpose of evil against Jesus. Because opportunity had been wanting, his base design had not taken precise form; he would fain put upon himself the falsehood, that his master had accused him without reason, and was about to denounce him to his fellow disciples before he had done any wrong. He went out then, I imagine, swearing in his heart that, since he was called a traitor to his face, he would be a traitor, and would have his revenge before them all, for being treated thus.

While the soul of Judas is wrapped in the midnight darkness of his base purpose, the spirit of him, against whom he went to conspire with the priests, is all radiant with an ineffable glory. That Jesus, in alluding to the treachery of Judas, had no design but the one he stated, namely, to confirm the confidence of his disciples in him, appears from what passed after Judas had left the place. Jesus did not point after the traitor, but, in his retreating steps, he caught the sound of his own coming fate; and it broke upon him with a new distinctness. But, black though it was with suffering and scorn, yet,

with the penetrating vision of a God-inspired spirit, he pierced through all the darkness, and his eyes lightened with that flood of glory which has since streamed from the cross on which he expired, as if it were a sun! He thought no more of the false disciple; but as death came close to him, it was transfigured into an angel of the eternal Glory. In that doom, which to all other eyes announced defeat and ruin, he saw a magnificent victory, as it has in truth proved. The death of Jesus put the seal of an immortal triumph to his life. And when he saw his hour of suffering so near at hand, well did he exclaim, ‘Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him, and that immediately.’

But, now that the parting hour had come, he looked round upon his disciples, from whom he was so soon to be separated, and his heart broke into a sudden gush of tenderness. ‘My children,’ said he, ‘I shall be with you only a little while. You will seek me; and, as I said to the Jews, so now I say to you, whither I am going, you cannot go.’ And then, as, in the near prospect of separation, he was made so aware of his affection for them, that it seemed new to him, and as if he now loved them for the first time, he added, ‘A new commandment I give you, that ye love one another as I have loved

you. By this will you be known as my disciples, if you love one another.' He was so deeply moved, his tone was so impressive, that, bewildered, filled with dismay at the idea of being deserted by him now, when they were so confidently thinking that they were on the eve of the fulfilment of their splendid hopes, 'where,' exclaimed Peter, 'where are you going?' 'Whither I go,' answered Jesus, 'you cannot follow me now, but you shall follow me hereafter.' 'Master,' cried the affrighted, agonized disciple, 'why cannot I follow you *now*? I will lay down my life for your sake! Do not leave us. Wherever you are going, let me go with you. We will die for you.' 'Will you lay down your life for my sake?' said Jesus; 'verily I say to you, another day will not dawn, the cock will not crow, till you have thrice denied that you ever knew me!' How much better did Jesus know his disciples than they knew themselves! He called them children, not solely from the impulse of his own tender affection, but because, with all their ambitious hopes, they manifested the artless, confiding spirit of children.

And now, too, when his words had struck dismay and despair to their hearts, and they sate around him with streaming tears and stifled sobs, overcome

by the prospect of separation from him, their leader, the fountain of their hopes and their very life, Jesus, with a superhuman forgetfulness of himself and his own mighty sorrow, although needing consolation most of all, gave himself wholly up to the office of comforting them, and suggested every consideration that could compose and strengthen them.

As their tears flowed, ‘be not distressed,’ said he, ‘trust in God, trust in me. There are many other places of abode in my Father’s house besides this; were it not so, I would have told you. By my going away, a place will be prepared for you; and when that place is prepared for you, we shall be together again. You know where I am going, and you know the way.’ ‘We do not know where you are going,’ sobbed one of them, ‘and how can we know the way?’ ‘I am the way, the true, the living way,’ said Jesus, ‘I am going to the Father, and you cannot go to the Father but by me, by following me.’ ‘Show us the Father,’ said another, ‘and we shall be satisfied.’ ‘Have I been so long with you?’ asked Jesus reproachfully, ‘and yet have you not known me, Philip? In seeing me, you have seen the Father, and how can you ask me to show you the Father?’

Do you not believe that the Father is in me, and that I am in the Father? The words that I speak are not my own, but it is the Father, dwelling in me, who is speaking and acting through me. Believe me, I am in the Father and the Father in me, or, if my declaration does not suffice, let my life speak for me; that manifests the presence of the Father. I assure you, if you only believe in me and in the Father in me, whatsoever I do, you will be able to do too; indeed, as I am going to the Father, and my course on earth is at an end, you will do greater things than I have done. Anything that as my friends, believing in me, you may desire to be done, will be done, and the glory of the Father will be manifested. As you love me, observe what I have commanded you, and I will pray the Father, and he will send another to comfort you in my place, who will never be parted from you, but remain with you always: the True Spirit, to whom the world is a stranger, but you know that spirit, for it is in you now, and it will continue with you. You shall not be left like orphans; I will be with you. In a little while I shall be on earth no more, but you will still see me, because I shall still live, and you will live too; and then you will know as you have not known, that I am in the Father,

and you in me and I in you. Only do as I have commanded you, and then, loving me, you will be loved by my Father, and I will love you, and manifest myself to you,—appear to you.' Here one of his disciples inquired, how he was going to manifest himself to them, and not to others. Jesus answered: 'If you love me, you will observe what I have said, and then my Father will love you, and we will both come and dwell with you. While I am yet among you, I tell you these things; but that true spirit in your own hearts, which instructs and comforts you, and which is from God, and which has been strengthened in you by my means, that will enlighten you, and remind you hereafter of all that I have said, and enable you to understand what you do not understand now. Peace be with you! but I do not give you this farewell salutation as it is ordinarily given. Do not be distressed, do not fear. You hear what I say; I am going to my Father; if you love me, you will be glad, because I am going to my Father, who is greater than I, and will protect and bless me: I tell you beforehand that I am going, so that when I am gone you may continue to believe me. I shall have no opportunity of talking again with you, for the power of the world is coming to separate us; but that it may be manifest that I love

the Father and obey him, come, let us leave this place.'

Before quitting the place, they sang a hymn, and then went out and crossed the brook Kedron to the Mount of Olives. On their way to this spot, Jesus and his disciples passed by or through a vineyard, which, as we may suppose, suggested the illustrations which he used in his discourse to his disciples. "I am the true vine," said he, "and my Father is the husbandman." "I am the vine, and ye are the branches." And then, carrying out the similitude, he enjoined it upon his disciples to continue true to him, and then they would have life, and produce much fruit, and glorify the Father. Thus far they had become what they were through their strong personal attachment to Jesus. It was their affection for him, which was the principle and life of their growth, and by which they would come to be so inspired, that their old Jewish ways of thinking would lose their power, and they would learn to do and to endure like their master, and bring forth fruit like him. 'Only keep my commandments,' said he, 'and you will continue to love me, just as I, by keeping my Father's commandments, continue in his love. And my special commandment is that you love one another with the same strength of

affection which I have borne towards you; and greater love than mine cannot be cherished, for I am going to lay down my life for you. Do as I require, and you are my friends,—not my servants, but my friends. As such I have always regarded you; for all that I have received of my Father, I have given you. You did not choose me, but I chose you, and I have appointed you to go forth and exert an enduring power, produce lasting fruit. When men hate and persecute you, remember that they hated me first. If you belonged to them, they would love you; but you are not of them. I have chosen you from among them, and therefore they will hate you. They will drive you from their synagogues. The time is coming when they who kill you will think that they are serving God thereby. All these things they will do to you, because they knew not my Father nor me. I tell you all these things beforehand, so that when they take place, you may recollect that I told you of them. I did not mention these things to you at first, because I was with you; but now I am going to Him that sent me, and when I tell you all this, you are filled with sorrow. Nevertheless, I assure you, it is necessary, for your sakes, that I should leave you.'

So long as he continued with them, they would persist in indulging the ignorant Jewish hopes which stood in the way of their progress towards larger ways of thinking. The death and departure of their master, though it shocked them in the prospect, would yet bring nobler thoughts, and expand their minds with a new and larger measure of the spirit of Truth ; that spirit of mind, which, he said, would be their comforter in his stead. With what truth, then, did he assure them that it was expedient for them that he should go away ; that if he did not leave them, the comforter would not come to them ! That spirit, he said, which was already with them and in them, would come with increased light and power, and teach them all that they could wish to know.

Thus it is always. The things, the persons, that help us in our inner growth, can give us only limited help. They assist us for awhile, and then impede us. The time comes when they have done for us all that they can, and then they must leave us, or we leave them. Our earthly friends, by teaching us to love, by practising us in the divine art, prepare us to love a higher than any earthly friend, parent or child. But if they did not leave us and go away, they would become our idols ; we

should rest in them, become stunted in our growth, and never know the richness and comfort of a higher love.

Had not Jesus been parted from his friends, they would have kept brooding on the bright vision of the Messiah's reign ; and that spirit of Truth which comes from Heaven, would have been excluded from their minds. In answer to all his consoling words, his disciples expressed their entire confidence in him. They believed, they said, that he had come from God. ‘Do you believe in me?’ said he ; “Behold ! the hour is coming, it is even now come, when you will all be scattered, and I shall be left alone ; and yet,’ he added, ‘I am not alone, the Father is with me.’

Bidding them then be comforted, although they would have much to suffer, he raised his eyes to Heaven in prayer for himself and them. The hour of his death had come ; and, appealing from earth to Heaven, he naturally rose in thought far above the temporary dishonor which the world around him was casting on him, even to a consciousness of that glory which he had with God ; an uncreated glory, a glory which existed in the Divine mind from eternity, before the world was. He then prayed with a solemn fervor for his friends, that they might be

made holy by Truth ; that they might be entirely one with one another, with him, and with God ; that they might discern his glory, which was not the creation of a day, and share in it, and be with him where he was.

They were at this time, I suppose, in some retired part of the Mount of Olives. He was momently expecting to fall into the hands of his enemies. Having been thus engaged in comforting his disciples, and preparing them for the parting that was at hand, he sought a moment's retirement for himself, and turned towards a garden, to which he had loved often to resort, and where he had often gone to walk with his disciples.

When I read that the garden of Gethsemane was a favourite spot of his, and that he had often visited it, and then consider that here is the only mention that is made of it, I am struck with the incompleteness of the records. So far as they go, they are miracles of truthfulness ; and they tell us enough to enable us to form a living idea of Jesus and his teachings. But, nevertheless, how much have they left untold ! It is natural to conclude that only the most striking incidents of his life, only his most remarkable sayings, only those things, in fine,

which could not possibly be forgotten, which burnt themselves into the minds of men, beyond the possibility of erasure, have been recorded. And when we consider the intrinsic character of the events that compose the history of Jesus, we perceive that it must have been even so. Had there been no implements of writing whatever, had no art of printing been subsequently invented, had there been no rocks even, upon which a record might have been rudely engraved, still the memory of such events would have kept sounding on from age to age.

CHAPTER IX.

THE GARDEN — THE HOUR OF DARKNESS — THE AR-
REST — THE HIGH PRIEST — PETER — THE TRIAL
— HEROD — PILATE — CRUCIFIXION — DEATH.

THE garden to which Jesus went was connected, it appears, with a farm, devoted to the cultivation of the olive, and bearing the name of Gethsemane, from an olive or oil-press established there. Only a few years ago, the garden was planted with olive, almond, and fig-trees. The locality is identified, at the present day, by eight olive-trees standing there, which are so large, and apparently so aged, that they are supposed to have existed in the time of Jesus. Although it may be doubted whether they are the same trees under which he walked, since, according to Josephus, the Romans, when they destroyed Jerusalem, cut down all the trees within

a hundred furlongs of the city, yet the present trees, bearing the marks of great age, may have sprung from the ancient roots. The olive is propagated thus, and is very long-lived.

So savagely picturesque, so ghostly, as I have been told, is the olive-tree, in the forms it presents, that the imagination of the modern traveller must be as deeply stirred in visiting Gethsemane, as by any one spot in all

those holy fields,
Over whose acres walked those blessed feet,
Which, eighteen hundred years ago, were nailed,
For our advantage, on the bitter cross.

Those trees, I imagine, in their contorted shapes might seem to be the rugged characters in which Nature has inscribed on the spot her wild record, in enduring memorial of the untold agony of which that garden was the scene.

When Jesus reached this place, he bade his disciples remain near the entrance, perhaps, while, taking with him the three to whom he appears to have been most attached, he retired to a secluded and, perhaps, favorite part of the garden.

Having put himself and his own sorrows by, in comforting his weeping followers, now, when that

office had been discharged to the uttermost, and now too, when his physical exhaustion must have been extreme, there came, through the weakness of the flesh, a natural revulsion ; and in the stillness of the night, and the loneliness of the spot, a sense of his own solitary situation, and of the horrors that were gathering round him, came over him with an overwhelming power. Then he entered into that baptism to which he had more than once alluded, and the billows went over his head ; and it seemed to him, as he told his three friends, as if he should die ; so great was the anguish of his mind. He bade them stay where they were, and watch,—it is evident he was every moment expecting the emissaries of the priests, and did not wish to be taken by surprise,—while he retired a short distance to pray. And then he threw himself prostrate on the earth, and his disciples overheard him say : ‘ O my Father ! if it be possible, let this cup pass from me ; nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done :’ but they, overcome by excitement and fatigue, soon fell asleep. He returned to them, and found them sleeping, and said reproachfully to Peter, who had always, and especially within the last hour, been so forward in his professions of attachment ; ‘ What ! could you not watch with me one hour ? Watch and pray, lest

you fall into temptation !' How must this warning have been wrung from his own agonizing experience at the moment ! "The spirit," he added, "is willing, but the flesh is weak." Was this, too, the breathing of his own tried and struggling soul, or was it an excuse for the unseasonable and unwilling slumbers of his disciples, or was it both ? Having awakened his disciples, that he might receive notice through them, if any one approached, again he retired to pour out his soul in prayer to Heaven. Again the same ejaculations were heard to burst from his lips ; and again he came back and found them asleep. How great must have been his exhaustion, when they were so weary ! Awakening them, he returned the third time, and they caught from him the same words ; and so great was his agony in the sense of his dark and lonely fate, that, when he returned to his disciples, they saw the sweat running from him as copiously as if it had been his life-blood. The gloom, the solitude, the silence of the hour, and the suspense of the moment, always far sharper than the acutest physical pain, all combined to crush him to the earth.

At last his ear caught the sound of coming feet, or he may have dimly descried the forms of those approaching. He had not struggled and prayed in

vain ; in the hour of his extremity, strength came to him like a swift angel from Heaven ; and when he returned for the last time, and found his disciples again slumbering, ‘ You may sleep on now,’ he said, meaning evidently that their watching was now of no avail ; ‘ you may sleep on now, and take your rest, for the time has come, and I am delivered into the hands of evil men ; but arise ! come ! he that betrays me is at hand.’ And upon this, a large company, variously armed, to guard against a rescue, approached. Judas, who was their guide, ran in advance, and saluted and kissed Jesus, having agreed with those who came with him to designate their victim in this way. Jesus received him with a calmness, and even kindness, that must have gone like a dagger to the heart of the traitor. ‘ Friend, for what have you come ? Do you betray me with a kiss ?’ Judas, having thus indicated Jesus to his captors, retreated,—vanished in the shadows of the night, but with the lurid glare of his own guilt about to break upon his soul.

Jesus advanced to meet those who came to seize him, and asked whom they wanted. Upon their saying, ‘ Jesus of Nazareth,’ ‘ I am he,’ he replied : but so self-possessed, so commanding was his appearance, that those in front of the band, who

perhaps fully expected to find one ready to fly before them, were so impressed by this unlooked-for fearlessness and a certain majesty in his air, and perhaps panic-struck also, for the moment, at the sudden thought of his mysterious power, started back so precipitately that some of the crowd were borne to the ground.

They were thrown into such confusion, and paused so long before they advanced to take him, that again he asked whom they sought, and when they again answered, ‘Jesus of Nazareth,’ ‘I have told you,’ said he, ‘that I am he;’ and then forgetful of himself, and seeking to secure the safety of his disciples, he added; ‘If then you seek me, let these go their way.’ As they approached to lay hold of him, his disciples were disposed to resist with force, and Peter actually drew a sword, and wounded a servant of the High-Priest; but Jesus commanded him to put up the sword, observing that they who use the sword will perish by the sword, and intimating that he surrendered himself voluntarily. He then said to the persons who were binding him; ‘Have you come with swords and bludgeons to arrest me like a thief? What need was there of proceeding thus secretly? In the broad light of every day I have been seated publicly teaching in

the temple, but you laid no hands upon me ; but this is your fit season,—the night time.' The disciples, seeing him now in the power of this armed band, all forsook him and fled : and he was led away to the residence of the High-Priest, where the leading Pharisees were assembled, anxiously waiting for him to be brought before them.

Peter and John followed him to the High-Priest's palace ; and John having some acquaintance with the family, went in, and by leave of the maid-servant, who waited at the door, introduced Peter also. This woman, of course in her master's interest, recognized Peter, as he was passing in, as a follower of Jesus, and said to him, 'Are you not one of this man's followers ?' and he answered that he was not.

In the meanwhile, the High-Priest, taking the lead in virtue of his office, began to question Jesus, demanding to know the number of his disciples, and what he taught. Jesus replied : 'What I have taught, I have taught before all the world, in public places, in synagogues, and in the temple where the people assemble. I have said nothing in private. Why do you question me ? Inquire of those who have heard me. They know what I have said.' The High-Priest, being thus answered, could not

but appear contemptible ; and one of his people standing by, fancying that he had been spoken rudely to, because he was silenced, struck Jesus in the face with the palm of his hand, exclaiming, ‘ Is this the way you speak to the High-Priest ? ’ ‘ If I have said anything wrong, show where the wrong is,’ calmly answered Jesus ; ‘ but if I have said only what is true, why do you strike me ? ’ Various individuals then came forward to testify as to things that they had heard him say ; repeating and garbling fragments of his teachings. But so confused and trifling were these charges, that Jesus deigned no reply. He saw very clearly that his death was resolved upon ; and even when the High-Priest asked him if he had nothing to say, his silence answered, Nothing. Then Caiaphas adjured him, by the living God, to speak, and say whether he were the Christ. He replied that he was, and that it would so appear in the most convincing manner. Although secretly gratified, no doubt, at obtaining from him such a declaration, the High-Priest rent his clothes, in sign of horror, and exclaimed against such blasphemy, and the council all declared that Jesus ought to be put to death.

And then began a sickening scene of brutal violence. He was spit upon, and struck again and

again, and made the sport of their wanton cruelty ; and blows and ridicule were poured upon that sacred head. They blindfolded him, and then kept striking him, bidding him exhibit his prophetic gift, and tell who it was who struck him. In referring to these details, I can hardly bear to depart from the phraseology of the records, to the full significance of which we are rendered insensible by custom ; the effect of which, in this instance, is scarcely to be regretted, although we so often have reason to lament its influence in veiling from us the vivid reality of the history.

While these things were going on, Peter was standing by the fire which had been kindled. The courage that brought him to the place had vanished ; and when again charged with being a follower of Jesus, terrified at what he witnessed, and at what his own fate might be, he declared that he did not know what the person who accused him thus was talking about, that he had no acquaintance with Jesus. The third time, the same charge was brought against him with increased confidence. His speech, it was said, betrayed him to be a Galilean. And then he denied it, with oaths, and imprecations on himself in case he did not speak the truth, calling Heaven to witness. That familiar voice, pouring

out curses, caught the ear of his master, who, insensible to the savage violence of which he was the object, turned and looked at Peter. There was no surprise, no anger, no wounded feeling, in that look, but a divine pity, and a piercing, monitory significance, that went to the inmost soul of the false disciple; and he rushed out, and burst into an agony of bitter, bitter weeping.

All this took place at night; a fit season. Apart from the brutal manner in which he was treated, let it be remembered how he must have been well nigh worn out by the exhausting life he had been previously, and within a few days, leading. When the morning dawned, the priests and leading men caused him to be led, bound, to the palace of the Roman Procurator, Pontius Pilate, whither they also went in a body. They directed him to be carried into the prætorium, or judgment-hall; but the priests and Pharisees, though they were thirsting for innocent blood, were so very religious, that they would not themselves go into the Gentile court, lest they should be defiled in the eye of the ceremonial law, by coming in contact with Gentiles, and so be incapacitated to observe the Feast. But a number of persons, I suppose, went in, and John, probably, among them. The governor came out, and inquired

of the priests what charge they brought against Jesus. ‘If he were not a criminal,’ said they sullenly, ‘we should not have delivered him up to you; he leads away the people, and pretends that he is a king; and he has been going all over the country, teaching, beginning in Galilee.’

As soon as Pilate heard that Jesus was a Galilean, he resolved to send him to the Jewish prince, Herod, who chanced to be in Jerusalem at the time, and in whose jurisdiction Galilee was. The Roman governor, who, throughout, sought to evade the responsibility of his office, thinking it would be a fine opportunity to renew the friendly terms, which had been on some account interrupted, between him and Herod, and also to get rid of the matter altogether, sent Jesus to Herod, who had heard of him, and was curious to see him, hoping to see him work a miracle. The priests and Pharisees accompanied Jesus to the residence of Herod, and accused him, in the presence of that prince, with great vehemence; to all which, Jesus probably answered nothing. His appearance was so wholly devoid of everything like vulgar force, that Herod could not but ridicule the idea of such a person’s being dangerous. He allowed his guards to make him the object of their rude jests; but as there was

nothing in him to provoke their cruel treatment, Herod soon tired of it, and sent him back to Pilate. No doubt, Pilate's heart sank within him with vexation, when he saw Jesus returned upon his hands; but a better understanding was established with Herod, and that was some consolation.

Pilate then, as before, tried to induce the Priests to settle the matter themselves; but they said that, though Jesus ought to die, they had no power to condemn him to death.

While thus engaged, the governor received a message from his wife, charging him not to suffer Jesus to be harmed, for that he was an innocent man, and she had had a dream about him, which greatly disturbed her. It is altogether probable that she had previously heard much of Jesus, of his sayings and his works; and that her imagination had been so much excited, as well it might be, that she had dreamed about him.

Pilate was by no means devoid of humanity, but he was evidently a weak man. He would gladly have saved Jesus; but though he saw the malignity of the priests, and the absurdity of the charges which they brought against him, he had not courage, knowing their influence with the people, to exercise his rightful authority. As he had failed

in attempting to throw his responsibility on Herod and the priests, he began to question Jesus, hoping to get something from him that would help him to a decision. ‘Are you a king?’ he asked. ‘Do you ask me this question,’ said Jesus in return, ‘because you yourself believe that I have assumed that character, or, because others have told you that I pretend to be a king?’ It is clear from these words that Jesus understood Pilate, saw that he was a tool, and had no mind of his own. And the answer of Pilate is a virtual confession of his incapacity to decide for himself, which he hides from his own eyes under cover of his Roman pride: ‘I know nothing of the matter,’ he says in effect, ‘I am no Jew; your own people and the priests have delivered you up to me; What have you done?’ Jesus answered, ‘My kingdom is not of a worldly nature; if it were, I should have had adherents who would have fought for me, and prevented my falling into the hands of the priests: my kingdom is not of this kind.’ ‘Then you are a king?’ said Pilate. ‘Yes,’ answered Jesus, ‘I am a king; for this end was I born, and for this cause did I come into the world, to testify to the Truth; and every true man is my subject,—hearkens to my voice.’ ‘What is Truth?’ asked the governor; but, expecting from a poor Jew

no satisfactory solution of a question which had so often been asked of great philosophers, but never answered, he went out again to the priests, without waiting for an answer, and told them that he could find no fault in him.

He next proposed that, as it was the custom for some one prisoner, as an act of grace, to be released at the time of the Passover, he should release this king, as they styled him. But the priests had instructed their partisans to call for the release of Barabbas, a notorious robber and rioter, then in confinement for sedition and murder. ‘What then,’ asked the governor, ‘shall I do with Jesus who is called the Christ?’ ‘Let him be crucified!’ they answered. ‘But what evil has he done?’ To the expostulations of Pilate, however, no reply was returned but the savage cry, ‘Let him be crucified!’

When the governor saw that he could not turn them from their cruel purpose, and the clamor that was raised grew so loud that he could not make himself heard, he took water, which we may suppose was standing near in some vessel, and dipping his hands into it, shook it off, to intimate by this expressive act, to the whole crowd, and to those at a distance especially, what he announced at the same time in words; calling all to witness that he

would not stain himself with innocent blood ; that the responsibility must lie with them. Expressive as this act was, it was a very weak evasion, as if, suffering Jesus to be put to death when it rested solely with him, he could, nevertheless, clear himself of his blood as easily as he dashed the water from his hands. ‘ His blood be upon us and our children ! We will take the responsibility !’ yelled the priests and the mob. In the ruins of Jerusalem, soaked in blood, a few years after, how terribly was this cry answered !

Weak as he was, Pilate could not satisfy himself thus. He next sought to appease the priests, by subjecting Jesus to the torture of the scourge. The Roman scourge was a whip with a number of thongs, pointed with sharp bits of metal, and is by ancient authors termed horrible, from the fearful blows which it inflicted. By thus far yielding to the appetite for blood, Pilate hoped to allay it ; but he only inflamed it. So far from gaining anything by this act of cruelty, he only betrayed his weakness, and stimulated the efforts of the priests. After causing Jesus to be scourged, and giving him up to the brutal sport of his soldiers, who put on him an old purple robe, and a crown of thorns or weeds, in derision of his royal pretensions, saluting him as

a king, while they treated him as a poor, worthless creature, Pilate had him brought out, arrayed in the purple robe and mock crown, and presented to the view of the mob. Calling to them to look at the man, while he affirmed that he found no fault in him, he trusted either that their hearts would be softened at the sight, or that they would be shamed out of the folly of regarding such a person as dangerous.

At sight of him, the chief priests and their retainers, like wild beasts, ravenous in the presence of their prey, began to shout, ‘Crucify him! crucify him!’ Pilate said, ‘Take him yourselves and crucify him, for I find no fault in him.’ ‘We have a law,’ said they; ‘and by that he ought to die, because he has pretended to be the Son of God.’

Although the governor was of that careless character, that he could ask what Truth is, without waiting for an answer, yet he might well have been liable to superstitious fears, nevertheless. When he heard that Jesus had claimed to be the Son of God, his alarm increased. When two such persons as Jesus and Pilate were brought together, it must needs be, notwithstanding the wide difference in their external circumstances, although Jesus stood there as a prisoner, and Pilate as a judge, that the

superiority of the former would make itself felt at once, and almost unconsciously, by the latter. The weak mind of Pilate must have been completely overawed, from the very first, by the calm bearing of Jesus, by the silence and serenity which he preserved amidst the horrid din of a mob clamoring for his life. And although the governor had little reason to regard anything the priests might say, yet the whole appearance of the man arraigned before him, from its very simplicity, may well be imagined to have been invested, in the anxious and perplexed eyes of Pilate, with an air of alarming mystery, and to have given the warrant of truth to the idea of his being some god in disguise.

Jesus was again led back to the judgment-hall, and Pilate also went in, and began again to question him. ‘Whence are you?’ he inquired; or, in other words, ‘Who are you?’ Jesus made no reply. Of what avail was it to speak, when he saw that Pilate had no strength to protect him. ‘Do you refuse to speak to me?’ asked the governor; ‘do you not know that I have power to crucify you, and have power to release you?’ That was more than Pilate knew, himself. His mind must have misgiven him, as to the reality of his authority, or he would hardly have paraded it thus. This sounds like a

cowardly man. ‘You could have no power to harm me,’ said Jesus, ‘unless it were given you from above. The chief guilt of this transaction lies with those who have delivered me into your hands.’ Without excusing Pilate, he simply denied him the power to which he pretended. True and just was the man of Nazareth, even in this fearful crisis.

The governor now manifested an increased desire to release Jesus, but the priests began to threaten. The weakness which he had shown, their sight, sharpened by a resolute purpose, could not fail to detect. They were not likely to be insensible to the advantage which he had given them by his wavering course, and by the concession he had already made to their demands, in having ordered Jesus, whom he had declared innocent, to be scourged. ‘If you let this man go,’ cried they, ‘you are not Cæsar’s friend: whosoever assumes to be a king, speaks against Cæsar.’ At this allusion to the reigning Cæsar, Tiberius, one of the most suspicious tyrants that ever held the Roman sceptre, the Procurator might well tremble, especially if he did not feel himself secure of the imperial favor; and that he could hardly have been devoid of anxiety on this score, we may infer from the

notoriously rapacious manner in which he was administering his procuratorship, and from the fate that finally overtook him: banishment on the charge of treason.

Upon hearing this mention of his imperial master, Pilate again brought Jesus forth, and took his place on the judgment-seat which was erected outside the judgment-hall, upon a tessellated pavement which gave its name to the spot. Floors of variously colored stones were a mark of wealth and rank among the Romans, and the fashion had spread into the provinces. Julius Cæsar, it is stated by an ancient author, was accustomed to have, carried about with him, a quantity of differently colored pieces of marble, so that wherever he pitched his camp, a pavement of this kind might be laid.

But even after he had taken his place in the judgment-seat, and thus signified that he was about to yield to the barbarous demands of the priests, Pilate still hesitated. ‘Look at your king,’ said he, evidently hoping to taunt them out of their absurdity in raging so furiously against one so weak and unoffending as Jesus appeared to be. The only answer that was returned was, ‘Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!’ ‘Shall I crucify your king?’ asked Pilate. ‘We have no

king but Cæsar !' said the priests, making a pretence of loyalty. At the sound of that dread name, Pilate's feeble resistance ceased altogether, and he doomed Jesus to suffer death by crucifixion ; a mode of death then accounted so ignominious, and so excruciating, that an ancient writer says that not only should the cross be kept from the body of a Roman citizen, but the very name of it should not approach the thoughts, the eyes, or the ears of a Roman.

The construction of the cross is familiar to us all. As far as can be gathered from ancient writings, it was not so high as it is usually represented. The wretched victims of this barbarous death were nailed to the cross by the hands ; the feet, which were not nailed, but bound to the cross with cords, were not more than three feet from the ground. About the middle of the upright post or stake, a piece of wood was attached, and was designed to support the body of the sufferer, who was placed astride upon this centre-piece or seat. This support was provided, not to alleviate suffering, but merely to uphold the body ; as those upon whom this terrible torture was inflicted were sometimes left to writhe in agony for days, until, exhausted at last by thirst and pain, they expired, and then their

bodies wasted away in the sun and the rain, or were devoured by wild beasts and birds of prey. To this bitter death, Pilate sentenced Jesus.

Then was Jesus again given up to the soldiers, whose barbarian natures, long fed by bloody sports and gladiatorial shows, found pleasure in torturing a poor, defenceless, fellow-man. Again was every indignity heaped upon him ; and, taking the idea from the governor, in ridicule of his kingly claims, they put a reed in his right hand, to represent a sceptre, and knelt down before him, and pretended to salute him as a king, striking him all the while. And he silently bore it all, like a lamb in the bloody house of slaughter, and forgave them in his heart, knowing how ignorant they were of what they were about. At last they grew tired, and stripped off his mock regalities, and put his own clothes on him, and led him away to execution.

According to custom, the cross to which he was to be nailed was laid upon his shoulders, and he was required to carry it. He bore it, half fainting, through the streets of the city, towards the place of execution, outside the walls, and was followed by a crowd ; and there were many women in the crowd, who wept to see his sufferings ; and, as they pressed near to him, with looks of the deepest commisera-

tion, and with streaming eyes, ‘Daughters of Jerusalem,’ said he; ‘weep not for me, weep for yourselves and your children. For behold, the days are coming, when it will be said, Blessed are they that never bare, and the breasts that never gave nourishment. And then, too, the people will invoke the hills and mountains to fall and cover them from the calamities of that day. If the innocent suffer as I do, what will be done to this guilty nation! If such things are done to the green tree, what will befall the dry?’

When the dark procession had got beyond the city walls, his strength gave out; and so evident was it that he was not equal to the cruel burthen of the cross, that the soldiers who had him in charge, fearing, perhaps, that he might die before he reached the place of execution, and so disappoint them of their savage amusement, laid hold of a stranger coming from the country, and compelled him to go behind Jesus and carry the cross. Blessed privilege! who would not have leaped to give him even that poor relief?

The name of this stranger, Simon, a Cyrenian, on whom the indignity, which the soldiers thought to put on him, has conferred immortal honor, is mentioned in two of the records; and in one of the

two, it is said that he was the father of Alexander and Rufus. It would seem, then, that these two individuals were known among the early disciples. And in the book of the Acts of the Apostles, we find Alexander mentioned as a companion of Paul at Ephesus; and among the friends at Rome, to whom Paul sends salutations at the close of his epistle to the disciples in that city, the name of Rufus occurs. It is probable, therefore, that the part which Simon, from Cyrene, was unexpectedly required to take on that occasion, was the means whereby his sons, and, I suppose, he himself also, became disciples of Jesus.

The spot appointed for the crucifixion, on a hill called Calvary, was only a short distance from Jerusalem. It received its name, Golgotha, a skull, from the fact that the bodies of those who had been executed were buried there. To the Jews, who considered themselves defiled by contact with any dead body, this spot must have been peculiarly hateful. When it was reached, as Jesus appeared greatly exhausted, there was offered him vinegar, or some medicated mixture; such as was given, in accordance with a custom, which had some touch of humanity in it, to those who were about to be crucified, in order to enable them the better

to endure their sufferings. But though probably already tortured with thirst, he refused to drink it, or to owe any strength to such help.

And then they nailed his hands and fastened his feet to the cross; and as his blood trickled down, and his limbs quivered under the torture, no cry of pain broke from his parched lips; but, ‘Father, forgive them,’ he exclaimed, ‘they do not know what they are doing!’ He knew that those men, brutal as they were, had they known who and what manner of person they were treating with such barbarity, would have kissed the hands which they were lacerating, and prostrated themselves at his feet, and bathed them with their tears. Knowing this, he would allow no sufferings of his own, however severe, to blind him to this extenuation of their cruelty. From amidst the horrors of the cross the ineffable mercy lightens!

Pilate, smarting in his weak soul, under a sense of his own humiliation, in being made a tool of, was determined to be revenged upon the priests: it was a small revenge that he took, but it no doubt was some gratification to a weak man like Pilate. He caused to be attached to the cross, over the head of Jesus, a writing designating him as the king of the Jews; and in order to render the taunt as irritating

as possible, Pilate caused the writing to be in Greek, Hebrew, and Latin, that Greeks and Romans, as well as Jews, might read it. The priests tried to induce him to alter this superscription, but he refused; compensating himself for the want of power in the more important matter, by making them feel it in this small particular.

With Jesus, two others were crucified, thieves, who had probably been reserved for execution until the feast, when large numbers of people were collected at Jerusalem.

And a crowd of people stood and looked on; and some of the priests came, with teachers of the law, and the leading men of the nation, to glut their vengeance and hate with the sight of his agonies. No drop of pity fell from their hearts of stone; but they tossed their heads in triumph, and said: ‘He saved others: if he is the great king, let him come down from the cross; we will believe in him then: he pretended to put his trust in God; let God deliver him now, if God befriends him: he called himself the Son of God!’ And other voices were heard calling out to him from the crowd: ‘You, who said you could destroy the temple and rebuild it again in three days, save yourself, and come down from the cross! ’

And even one of those who were crucified with him, joined in railing at him; but the other reprobred his companion, confessing his own guiltiness, and asserting the innocence of Jesus. However he may have offended, there was evidently a soul of pure goodness in this man, that was touched by the appearance of Jesus, and that needed only to look at him, to be satisfied that he was innocent. Far, very far from being hardened in guilt, was this man. He showed a sensibility which Jesus was sure to appreciate. He called to Jesus and said : "Master, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." "Verily I say unto you," said Jesus, "to-day thou wilt be with me in Paradise!" Already by his humble, penitent, and reverent heart he was with Jesus, not in suffering only, but also in spirit. Already was he entering Paradise, although by a gate of fire.

At a little distance from the cross, amidst the crowd, the mother of Jesus was standing, supported by his dearest friend, John. What a scene was that for a mother to witness! What agony was her's! Her dying son caught sight of her; and though his flesh was writhing with the torture of his position, and his tongue and lips were burning with the death-thirst, he gasped out to her in broken

words, ‘Woman! look there! thy son!’ What a world of love was there! It was as if he had said, ‘Grieve not for me. Let John be your son now. Give *him* your mother’s heart.’ And he called to John also: ‘See! your mother! Take my place, and cherish her as your mother!’ Though his words were disjointed and brief, yet he was understood; and thenceforth John regarded Mary as his mother.

After this, the sufferings of Jesus became so excruciating, that, in his agony, a cry of desperation burst from his lips; but it took form, in his devout spirit, from the language of one of the pathetic songs of David: “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!” Speaking in his own language, he addressed God by that name which, in the native dialect of Jesus, is precisely the same name of God which the Mahometan uses at this day,—“Allah! Allah!”

Some of the bystanders, touched with pity at his agonies, were about to offer him the mixture of vinegar, or sour wine, which was at hand; but others interfered, and, wilfully misunderstanding the words he had just uttered, said in derision, ‘He is calling for Elias; let us wait and see whether Elias will come to his assistance.’ After an inter-

val, burning with thirst, he exclaimed, ‘I thirst!’ and then they dipped a sponge in the mixture, and fastening it on the end of a stick, raised it to his lips; but he desired no such stupefying aid, and, agonized as he was, he refused to take it.

At length, as death drew on, in triumphant trust in God, gathering up his utmost strength, he cried aloud, ‘Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.’ And as the benign lethargy of death stole over him, and his sense of suffering was dulled, he exclaimed, ‘It is over!’ and his head fell upon his breast, and he expired. And that angel spirit sank into the arms of the Everlasting Father, and was at peace.

CHAPTER X.

JESUS DESTROYED BY A FACTION — STARTLING CIRCUMSTANCES ATTENDING HIS DEATH — APPARITIONS — THE BODY TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS — THE BURIAL — THE GUARD — DISCIPLES DISCONSOLATE — RESURRECTION — THE WOMEN AT THE TOMB — REAPPEARANCE TO MARY — TESTIMONY IRRESISTIBLE — CONCLUSION.

IT may seem, at first sight, difficult to understand, when Jesus was in such high favor with the mass of the people, that the priests and Pharisees, powerful as they were, dared not offer him any violence in public, how it was that, when they had once by treachery secured his person, they succeeded in executing their bloody purpose without encountering the smallest resistance. It is true, the populace are proverbially inconstant, ready to tear in pieces, on the morrow, those whom to-day

they welcome with shouts of admiration. But it is not in this way altogether, that the success of the enemies of Jesus is to be accounted for.

It is plain that he fell a victim to a faction headed by men in power, by the ecclesiastical authorities of the nation, whom he had mortally offended by his fearless publication of the Truth. The majority of those who favored him were persons from the country, who considered themselves strangers in Jerusalem, and were, moreover, accustomed to defer to the priesthood. We all know, too, how a few bold, bad men, may overawe a multitude, and how the lowest of the people, those who delight in riot and bloodshed, are always ready to make common cause with any who offer them opportunity to glut their savage passions. The priests well knew that, if they could once possess themselves of the person of Jesus, and present him to the people in circumstances of disgrace and helplessness, as a criminal, the incongruity of such a situation with the magnificent idea of the Messiah, would be deeply felt, and the hopes which he had created would be withered at once. The generality of people are ever willing to be led.

After all, there were, no doubt, hundreds, who looked on and saw Jesus put to death, who in their

hearts abhorred the act, and would gladly have saved him, but they knew not what to do. They were very sorry, but they did not see how it could be helped. His enemies, though a small minority, were banded together and resolute; his friends, though many, were undecided; and there were numerous varieties and shades of feeling among them; and no one was sure of another. In corroboration of these remarks, we read that the people who went out to witness the crucifixion of Jesus, so soon as it was over, and he had breathed his last, returned to the city, with expressions of great grief at the event, smiting their breasts.

The last moments of Jesus were accompanied with many startling circumstances. For three hours the sky was so thickly overcast, that to his friends, who saw all things through the awful gloom of such a dread catastrophe, the darkness may well have seemed portentous. And there was the shock of an earthquake; whether the earth shook all around, in sympathy at the departure of so mighty and god-like a spirit, may be questioned, but it cannot be confidently denied, seeing that all things are intimately related and bound together to form the great whole, and the slightest movement is propagated throughout the universe. Be this, however,

as it may, the earthquake was so violent, that the stones which closed the mouths of the tombs were, in some instances, shaken from their places, and the bodies of the dead were thus exposed to the startled view of the alarmed passers-by; and individuals, excited and terrified by all that they had witnessed, had visions of ghosts. The dead appeared to many in fearful dreams; or simple, natural appearances became to minds affected with superstitious alarms, and to eyes dilated with wonder and fear, invested with a supernatural character. And, in addition to rumors of this kind, it was whispered with white lips, that the veil in the Temple, which hung before the Holy of Holies, and was probably worn by age, was discovered to be torn, which, however it may have happened, could not fail to be considered as a most ominous coincidence, although at any other time it would hardly have been noticed.

These circumstances, attendant on the death of Jesus, and generated or magnified by the agitation of the public mind, show us how great that agitation was, and undesignedly bear convincing witness to his extraordinary life and character. Men's minds could not have been so deeply stirred without adequate cause. He could have been no common person, by whose death the imagination was so fear-

fully excited that it laid open the world of the dead, and beheld apparitions of the departed, and accounted the darkness of the day, and the rent veil in the Temple, as appalling portents.

The centurion, who had command of the band of soldiers having in charge the crucifixion, and those who were with him, when he saw what took place, avowed their belief, not only that Jesus was innocent, but that he was what the Jews had said he claimed to be, the Son of God.

His chosen disciples, with the exception of John, had disappeared. They did not dare to show themselves, lest they should be recognized as his particular friends, and be treated accordingly. But the women, who had followed his steps with the ministry of their gentle and affectionate offices, endeavoring always to provide for his comfort, when, as must so often have been the case, he was worn out by fatigue and hunger and thirst, these women stood looking on at a distance; and when he had breathed his last, and the crowd was dispersed, they still lingered on the spot, anxious to see what would be done with those beloved remains.

At the close of the day, the priests and leading Pharisees went to Pilate, and requested that he would order the three crucified men to be killed, so

that their bodies might be removed, and the ghastly spectacle might not defile the next day, which was the Sabbath, and a day of special observance ; so zealous were they, blood defiled as they were, for the decencies of religion. And there went also to the governor, Joseph of Arimathea, a man of wealth and standing ; a member of the Sanhedrim, or Jewish council, who had refused to consent to the death of Jesus, and in private avowed himself his disciple ; and begged that the body might be given up to him. Pilate was so surprised to hear that Jesus had died so soon, that he summoned the centurion who had been charged with the execution, to ascertain from him whether Jesus were really dead. It was not common for the crucified to die so soon. They oftentimes lingered many hours and whole days ; but it is to be considered that those, upon whom this barbarous death was commonly inflicted, were persons of a rugged, animal nature, possessing little sensibility ; while the physical organization of Jesus must have been of such a character, that the wonder truly is, when we consider all that he endured, not that he died so soon, but that he did not die sooner ; that he lived to reach Mount Calvary. I suppose that Pilate was relieved, when he found that Jesus was dead, and he had thus

escaped the painful necessity of giving a new order for his death. Satisfied on this point, he directed that the wishes of the priests, and of Joseph, should be complied with.

We are told that they requested, not, in so many words, that the crucified should be put to death, but that "their legs should be broken," and the bodies removed. Although this operation could not fail to accelerate death, it is not easy to see how it would terminate life as speedily as was intended. But I suppose it was done in such a way, or accompanied by so severe a blow, as to extinguish life instantaneously.

The soldiers proceeded to fulfil the orders of Pilate. Aware that Jesus was dead, they first dispatched the two who were crucified with him, and then turned to him; and in order to make it certain that he was dead, one of the soldiers thrust his spear into his side. If, as is probable, the soldier stood in front of the body, and held the spear in his right hand, he must have pierced the left side. And that the spear, entering upwards, penetrated the pericardium, which surrounds the heart, appears from what followed. As the spear was drawn out, there flowed out water discolored with blood. The pericardium always contains a small quantity of

water, which serves the office of lubricating the heart, and which is said to be somewhat increased in cases of violent death.

And then came Joseph of Arimathea, accompanied by Nicodemus, with attendants, bringing a large quantity of myrrh and aloes; and they took the body down from the cross, and, wrapping it with the spices in linen cloth, they bore it to a garden near at hand, and laid it in a new tomb, hewn out of solid rock, in which no one had yet been buried; the women, friends of Jesus, looking on all the while. As the Sabbath was approaching, the burial was hurried. After placing a large stone at the mouth of the tomb, Joseph and the rest retired; the women, to make additional preparations for the burial of their friend in a manner accordant with the love they bore him, and to wait till the Sabbath should be over.

After the body had been given up to the friends of Jesus, and been buried by them, the priests and Pharisees went to the governor, and requested him to grant them a guard, to be stationed at the tomb, as they had heard that Jesus had said that he would rise from the dead on the third day, and they were afraid that his disciples might go and remove the body from the sepulchre, and then give out that

he had come to life, and so the imposture would be worse than ever. Pilate granted their request. A seal was so attached to the stone, or to a cord stretched across the stone, that it could not be removed without breaking the seal, and a guard was set. All this was done as privately as possible, after the departure of those who had laid the body in the tomb, or the next day. The disciples of Jesus do not appear to have known that a guard was stationed there, until afterwards.

The day after his death and burial was the Sabbath; a day of rest indeed to him. But although his body, no longer racked with pain, heaving no longer with the pulse of weary, struggling life, reposed in the peaceful arms of the angel of death, yet that soul, mighty in its truth and goodness, was still living, as all souls live. That could not die. It was repairing its God-given energy; and, by the same transcendent power by which it summoned Lazarus from the grave, it was about to reanimate and reawaken that frail and mangled form of flesh.

And the Sabbath came, and the sun rose and shone on that silent tomb, and the hours circled in their wonted order. The priests went through with their cumbrous formalities in the Temple, relieved from their fears, exulting in their triumph, and

dreading no change. The people missed that new and mighty teacher, whose works of power and beneficence had filled them all with wonder, and whose voice, that made their hearts burn within them, still lingered in their ears with an unwonted fascination. His disciples, rudely awakened from their brief, bright dream, were plunged in the deepest sorrow. He, whose presence had been their light, calling into life the most magnificent hopes, had perished on the vile cross, and they were lost in thick darkness. His body lay lacerated, dead, in the tomb. What remained for them, but to mourn their blasted lives, and, broken-hearted, to turn their heavy steps back again to Galilee, there to ply their irksome nets again upon the lake, feeding themselves on sad memories of the Past. How often, in their folly, had they disputed which should be the first in the grand kingdom! And now there was to be no first; the whole bright vision had melted into air. The throne of the Messiah, blazing with pomp, had disappeared, and there stood before them the grim cross, with the body of their fancied prince hanging there, torn and bleeding! Little dreamed they that that vile instrument of death was to surmount thousands of temples, and be worshipped as a divine symbol, and give its name

to the fairest of the constellations! How must they have wept over their utter disappointment! And yet in what tenderness must their hearts have been dissolved, and how must their tears have gushed forth afresh, as often as the tones of that loved voice woke again in their minds, and the image of the master they had adored rose vividly to remembrance, and they recalled his looks, beaming with affection, his words, burning with Truth. What though he had said he would rise again; what now were words, however vividly remembered, to the overwhelming, present fact. He was gone. The midnight of death had shut down and separated him from them. The inexorable grave held him.

Again the sun set, and the shadows of night gathered over Jerusalem and its thousands; and the women, with their spices and unguents all prepared, waited for another day. The day drew on. And as its first grey light glimmered through the curtains of the East, the body in the tomb began to stir again with returning life, and Jesus awoke from the profound sleep of death, and rose up from his rocky couch and stood upon his feet, and was again wholly himself; and at once he knew where he was, and all that had happened. Moving away the stone from the mouth of the sepulchre, he came forth,

and stood leaning on the stone, breathing the fresh morning air. To the guard, affrighted at this sudden and strange apparition, dressed all in white, and gleaming on them through the twilight, it seemed as if the earth, (jarred by the motion of the stone,) had quaked again, and this startling figure had alighted before them out of Heaven. Paralyzed with fear, they were at first struck motionless, and became as dead men; but soon, recovering themselves in a degree, they fled with the greatest precipitation to the city and to their employers; declaring, with the natural exaggeration of terror, that there had been an earthquake, and a supernatural messenger had appeared from Heaven, ‘with eyes like lightning, and raiment white as snow,’ and had removed the stone from the tomb, and sate upon it.

In the meanwhile, Mary of Magdala, and Mary the mother of James, and other women who had followed Jesus from Galilee, were on their way to the tomb, bringing with them sweet spices to do honor to the dead, according to the customs of the country. They did not know that a guard was stationed at the tomb. Had they known it, they would hardly have ventured near the spot, to be exposed to the rude jests of those rough Roman

soldiers, especially as they must then have known also, that they would not be permitted to open the tomb. As they drew near to the place, it occurred to them that they would have difficulty in rolling away the stone. In this perplexity they reached the spot, and to their great alarm found the stone removed, the tomb open.

At this sight, Mary of Magdala, thinking of Jesus only as the object of the most cruel persecution, was instantly possessed with the conviction that his enemies had rifled the tomb of its contents; determined that the dead body of one whom they so bitterly hated, should not rest in peace where his friends had laid it. Carried away by this very natural but precipitate impression, she ran back with the utmost haste and alarm to the city, to tell Peter and John that the tomb had been entered, and the body taken away.

The other women remained on the spot, wondering what could have happened; supposing with Mary, that his relentless persecutors had pursued Jesus even after death, and wreaked their vengeance on his lifeless remains. With exclamations of surprise and grief they approached and looked into the tomb, and suddenly there appeared before them a person in a long white dress, who immediately spoke

to them, bidding them not be afraid, saying that he knew whom they were seeking, Jesus, who had just been crucified, but that he was not there, (as they expected to find him.) ‘The dead is not here: he is risen: but go tell his disciples and Peter that he is risen, and will meet them in Galilee, whither he goes before them: doubt not, it is as I tell you.’

This unknown person, “a young man in a long white garment,” as he is described in one of the records, was, as I believe, no other than Jesus himself, who, having risen, and come forth wrapped in the white grave-clothes, putting to flight by his appearance the terrified guard, had, upon hearing the voices of the women approaching, re-entered the tomb, not wishing then to make himself known. I recognize Jesus in the unknown person by the particular mention made of Peter, who, when his master was suffering the most cruel treatment, had basely and with oaths disclaimed all knowledge of him, and who, without this express message, which breathes the god-like magnanimity of Jesus, might well fear, when assured that his master was alive again, that he himself would be disowned in return, as he well knew he so richly merited. At all events, even after receiving this hint of forgiveness, how must he have dreaded to meet again the master’s eye!

In the uncertain twilight, the white linen cloth in which Jesus was wrapped, was the most conspicuous object. Since, of course, he must have taken off the cloth which was folded round his head, and it lay apart by itself, dimly visible in the faint light, it suggested to the excited imagination of some of the terrified women the presence of two persons in white ; and they flew back to the city on the wings of joy and fear, and reported to the disciples that they had seen two angels at the tomb, who had told them that the master had risen !

In the meantime Peter and John, alarmed at the intelligence brought by Mary, hastened to the spot to verify her report. John, the youngest and most active, reached the tomb first ; but a natural hesitation came over him, and he paused to wait for Peter. As soon as Peter came up, they both entered the tomb, and found that the body had indeed disappeared ; but to their amazement, the grave-clothes were left behind, part in one place, and part in another. Wondering at this circumstance, at a loss to understand why, when the body was taken away, the grave-clothes should have been left, they came out from the tomb, and went away ; leaving Mary there, who had followed them, and with whom, struck dumb by these mysterious events, they ex-

changed not a word. Their silence satisfied her that it was even so, just as she had supposed: the body had been carried off.

And Mary stood there and wept; and as she wept, she stooped down and looked into the sepulchre. Her attention was instantly arrested by two white objects, (the linen cloths,) but before she had time for anything but surprise, she heard some one speak to her, asking, ‘Woman, what are you weeping for?’ Before she knew or thought whence precisely this simple question came, she uttered in reply the thought uppermost in her mind; ‘Because they have taken away my master, and I know not where they have laid him.’ While in the act of uttering these words she heard some one behind her, for, as soon as they passed her lips, she turned round, and saw Jesus, who said to her, ‘Woman, what are you weeping for? Whom do you seek?’ and who it was, I believe, that had put the question to her before, when she was stooping to look into the tomb, and not having caught her answer, was led to repeat it with an addition, as one naturally does when no answer has been returned to the first inquiry. It was natural also that Mary’s posture should confuse her perceptions as to the direction whence the voice proceeded. As, with eyes blinded by her tears,

she barely glanced at the person who spoke to her, she took him for the gardener, and without answering his question again, she said: ‘Sir, if you have borne him hence, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Mary!’ At the dear sound of that impressive voice she turned fully round, gazed at him for a moment with eyes all aflame with awe and rapture, and then fell breathless at his feet, exclaiming, ‘My master!’ So long did she remain in that attitude of reverence, so convulsively did she, in her emotion, grasp his knees, as if she could not enough assure herself that it was really he, flesh and blood, that he said to her, in effect, (so I understand the here somewhat obscure record,) ‘Do not stop to embrace me now. You will have other opportunities of seeing me. I have not yet left the world; but go and tell my disciples that I am about to ascend to my Father and their Father; to my God and their God.’ She then went and told them she had seen the master alive, and that he had said these things to her.

When Mary, upon returning to the city, learned that the other women had seen two angels at the tomb, as they said and believed, immediately, with that precipitation which marks the whole action of

her excited mind on this eventful morning, she concluded that the white objects she had seen when she looked into the sepulchre, and which had startled her so, were the very angels that had been seen by the women, and had spoken to them; and that it was one of these angels that had asked her why she was weeping, when she was stooping down and looking into the tomb, and when she knew not whence the question came. And so she was perfectly satisfied that she, too, had seen the angels, and that they had spoken to her; and so she said always afterwards, in relating her part in these startling occurrences. It was, I repeat, from Jesus, behind her, that the first question, which she afterwards attributed to the angels, came; and the circumstance, that when she turned towards him he asked the same question more pointedly, looks as if he had asked the question before, without receiving an answer. It is very natural that Mary, after she had seen the other women, and heard their story, should, in her characteristic haste, conclude that she, too, had seen the angels. But if, at the moment she saw the white objects in the tomb, she took them for angels, and believed that it was they who asked her why she wept, it is not at all likely that her attention would have been so readily drawn

away from them. They would at once have so riveted her whole soul, that every avenue of sense would have been closed against all other sights and sounds. As it was, had there really been angels, clad in white, in the sepulchre, they were there, as it appears, only for show. They served no purpose; they communicated no intelligence. Mary turned her back upon them, to speak to one whom she supposed to be the gardener. Why seek we angels, then, the living, among the dead?

It is stated in one of the records that, as the women were returning from the tomb with the message of the angels, they were met by Jesus, and that they prostrated themselves before him, and held him by his feet. It is easy to see how this mistake arose. Shortly after the women came into the city, saying that they had seen angels at the tomb, who told them that Jesus was alive, Mary came rushing in, saying that she had seen Jesus himself! Now, as Mary and the other women had all gone to the tomb together, it is natural that some, to whom these different reports came, should take the impression that *all* the women had seen Jesus. It was Mary by whom he was first seen, and who held him by his feet.

In the course of the Divine Story, which now draws reluctantly to its close, I have forborne to remark at any length upon the character of the records whence it is drawn ; but were ever writings so artless and truthful ? The character of Jesus himself is hardly more fully impressed with truth and nature than these accounts of him which have come down to us. Their authors tell the story with such simplicity, with such unbounded carelessness, with such an entire absence of any thought but of stating facts just as they seemed to them, so all unconscious were they of the True Spirit by which they were animated to their work, that the Life of Jesus, as it is told in the Four Gospels, appears emphatically to have written itself. It is what it is, by no design of their authors ; by no human will. These writings “grew as grows the grass.” The old doctrine of Plenary Inspiration in regard to them, comes true after all ; and true in a far deeper and more natural sense than has yet been imagined. In fine, the more I have studied them, the more deeply am I impressed with their character as matchless specimens of truth-telling ; not that their authors always state things just as they were, but they always give us the facts, with childlike freedom and simplicity, just as they appre-

hended them ; so that, when we have once come to understand their modes of thought and expression, we can, by means of the form and pressure which the occurrences they relate, took and left in their minds, arrive, in numerous instances, very nearly at the real state of the case.

And in no part do these records more fully breathe the life of truth and nature, than in their accounts of what happened at the sepulchre on that morning when Jesus reappeared alive. So wondrously true are they to all those passions which were then in full play, to the wonder, the fear, the joy which were all awakened, and which thrill through the whole story, that it is upon the character of the testimony thus afforded to the resurrection of Jesus, that my faith in this fact mainly rests. The fact itself is involved in the thickest mystery. What were the conditions of his existence after he had undergone the awful change of death ? Where was he after his resurrection, when not with his disciples ? And what finally became of him ? These are questions which not only baffle curiosity, but, like the creation of the first man, they repel every attempt at a solution. Nevertheless, that he was alive again, on that memorable morning, it is out of my power to question, surrounded though the

fact is, with these inevitable difficulties. It is attested by evidence which, as I have said, no human mind had any thought of furnishing, the evidence of Nature, of God himself.

How he woke to life again, we can only faintly surmise. It was by the native force of his mighty God-inspired being, prompted to this unprecedented act by the love he bore his disciples, and by his interest in the Truth, with which his inmost life was identified. That re-animated his lifeless body. Why he came to life again, consenting to re-visit and re-occupy that poor tenement of clay, I cannot undertake to say; except that I do not see how, had he not re-appeared to his disciples, they could have been saved from utter despair. His death, much as he sought to prepare them for it, came upon them at last like a thunderbolt, shivering into atoms all their fond visions, but giving them no light. They were lost in the thick gloom that succeeded. And I know not how those timid, bewildered men would ever have emerged from that cloud, the brave Apostles of Everlasting Truth, clad in power and great glory, had not Jesus shown himself to them again in person. In the light of his renewed presence, though the pinnacles of the Messiah's kingdom began again to glitter in the distance, and

they asked : “Lord, wilt thou now restore the kingdom to Israel ?” yet their love for him was kindled into a new enthusiasm, and their devotion to him was renewed with increased vigor, and they postponed their ancient hopes, and lived and died in his service, doing as he commanded.

After the brief interview with Mary at the sepulchre, Jesus, it is recorded, was seen repeatedly. He joined two of the disciples, as they were journeying to Emmaus, and continued with them for some time ; but they did not recognize him at first ; and when they did recognize him, they were amazed and bewildered, and he disappeared from their sight. Again, in the evening, when the disciples were all together, he came among them on two different occasions, with an interval of a week. In the last chapter of John’s account, we are told that Jesus appeared to seven of them while they were engaged in fishing on the Sea of Galilee. It is also said by Paul, in one of his epistles, that he was seen by more than five hundred of the disciples at once ; although, with a careless honesty, it is elsewhere stated that some doubted whether it were really he. After these interviews with his disciples, at different times, during forty days after his crucifixion, it is recorded that, after commanding them

to go abroad and publish to the world all that they had seen and heard, he led them out to Bethany, and gave them his farewell blessing, and after that was seen by them no more.

What he is stated to have said on these several occasions, sounds so like him, is in such keeping with his manner of speaking, and comes in so naturally, that it goes far to establish his identity after his resurrection. What human mind could have joined to the heaven-wrought texture of this history, so luminous with reality, another piece, which, fabricated by the ingenuity of man, would not have shown that it was woven in quite another loom? Nevertheless, it must be confessed that the notices of Jesus, after his resurrection, are very brief and imperfect. They suggest questions which will not be suppressed, and cannot be answered.

What finally became of him is known only to God. Here is a secret, which, in our present state of knowledge, is unfathomable. As we would not be wise on this point above what is written, it cannot fail to arrest our attention that, in the record attributed to his favorite disciple, no mention is made of his final disappearance, and that in the other three records there is not a word that requires us to understand their authors as intending even

to say that he ascended visibly into Heaven. They simply state that he bade them farewell, was parted from them and carried up into Heaven. It may be that they meant to be understood that they saw him ascend. And it may be that they have stated only their own inference. He disappeared from their sight; and they, of course, and justly, inferred that he went up to God. It is true, in the first chapter of Luke's History of the Acts of the Apostles we have a somewhat particular account of the visible ascension of Jesus. But when we consider the silence of the four principal records on this point, and bring into view the ease and frequency with which inferences are converted into facts, and facts are amplified, we shall hesitate to accord implicit assent to a statement which does not profess to be given by an eyewitness, and is not in accordance with the spiritual character of Jesus.

And thus is it with all things. The small sphere of our vision is encircled with an impenetrable darkness. And all that we know is, that all life is passing "from mystery to mystery, from God to God."

My chief aim, in the foregoing pages, has been to give expression to a simple sense of Truth.

While many have gone away, each to his own, hopeless of beholding the living Son of God, I seem to myself to have been standing, for many years, at the dark tomb of superstition, to which he was long ago consigned by hands that meant to do him honor; and although the military guard, so long stationed there by Church and State, has disappeared, and the stone, with its priestly seal, has been rolled away, yet it has seemed to me that he had been borne hence, and I knew not where they had laid him. Like Mary, I have thirsted to know whither he had been carried. At last, he has come forth from the dim, cold sepulchre, and I recognize him, glowing in all the fresh and breathing beauty of nature, in this ‘YOUNG MAN,’ clad in the white robes of Innocence and Truth, whose wondrous story I have here endeavored to tell. What heart will not prostrate itself at his feet, and cry, “My master!” And I can wonder no more that his first disciples exhausted the language of reverence, when they spoke of him, and that he has been worshipped for centuries, as more than an angel.

THE END.

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